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THE UNIVERSITY CLUB OF SAN FRANCISCO:  
ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF TRADITION AND CHANGE

Interviews with

Henry G. Hardy	Tindall E. Cashion
F. Barreda Sherman	Robert Morris
Churchill C. Peters	Charles E. Noble
Theodore L. Eliot	Murray Smith
Chauncey McKeever	William O. Sumner
Frederick O. Johnson	Ignazio J. Ruvo
John G. Lewis	

With an Introduction by  
Malcolm Post

Interviews Conducted by  
Lisa Jacobson and Ruth Teiser  
1986, 1987, 1988

Since 1954 the Regional Oral History Office has been interviewing leading participants in or well-placed witnesses to major events in the development of Northern California, the West, and the Nation. Oral history is a modern research technique involving an interviewee and an informed interviewer in spontaneous conversation. The taped record is transcribed, lightly edited for continuity and clarity, and reviewed by the interviewee. The resulting manuscript is typed in final form, indexed, bound with photographs and illustrative materials, and placed in The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley and other research collections for scholarly use. Because it is primary material, oral history is not intended to present the final, verified, or complete narrative of events. It is a spoken account, offered by the interviewee in response to questioning, and as such it is reflective, partisan, deeply involved, and irreplaceable.

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## Cataloging Information

THE UNIVERSITY CLUB OF SAN FRANCISCO: ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF TRADITION AND CHANGE, 1989, iv, 308 pp.

Thirteen member, including six former presidents, discuss the University Club of San Francisco. Topics include admission procedures, social activities and the Prohibition years, the atmosphere of the club over the years and club management, admission of women as guests in 1942, admission of women as members in 1988, impact of WWII on club membership, real estate conflicts with the Fairmont Hotel, reciprocal agreements with other clubs, the Bohemian Club.

Interviews with Henry C. Hardy, F. Barreda Sherman, Churchill C. Peters, Theodore L. Eliot, Chauncey McKeever, Frederick Johnson, John G. Lewis, Tindall E. Cashion, Robert Morris, Charles E. Noble, Murray Smith, William O. Sumner, Ignazio J. Ruvolo.

Introduction by A. Malcolm Post, Jr., President, University Club of San Francisco, 1986-1987.

Interviewed in 1986, 1987, 1988 by Lisa Jacobson and Ruth Teiser. The Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.





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## INTRODUCTION by A. Malcolm Post, Jr.

Like most of us, I still tend to regard with considerable awe the centennial celebration of any American institution. Although the history of California goes back more than 200 years, our city is still a young one, even by American standards; certainly the perception of San Francisco as a major city dates essentially from the post-Gold Rush era.

For a San Francisco institution, then, to mark its centennial should be a source of some pride to those connected with it.

In a sense, the roots of our club are more distant still, both in time and in space; they lie in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Harvard, America's oldest university, founded early in the 17th century. The group of like-minded souls who were to become the founding fathers of the University Club were first assembled by William Thomas--known to his many friends at the Club as Uncle Billy. Far from the ivied campus on the Charles, he first brought together a handful of Harvard men for periodic socializing in this city by the Bay.

From this group of expatriate Cantabs sprang the University Club; its founders included graduates of ten colleges and universities--all but one of them (the University of California at Berkeley) Eastern schools.

When we recall those early days, we should remember in particular two facts which gave a particular character to the Club. First, there were far fewer university graduates one hundred years ago than there are today. Thus, members of our club were in some ways a distinctly elite group--a group, moreover, which because of the rather narrower view of what constituted higher education had perhaps a more widely shared intellectual background than might a comparable group of university graduates today.

Second, we should remember that in those days before jet travel, near-instantaneous electronic communication, and the geographic and social mobility characteristic of our times, a man who had left behind roots, family, and friends in the East to come to San Francisco was to a considerable degree cut off from those ties. Hence he was probably more strongly impelled to seek the companionship implicit in an organization like the University Club.

Over the years the club has passed through trying times as well as good ones: the earthquake did not pass us lightly by, nor did two great wars and the intervening depression. On a few occasions it was only the devotion and generosity of a handful of members which stood between our club and extinction.

But we survived and we prospered. As we approach the beginning of our second century, other challenges and other opportunities will arise. I have absolutely no doubt that the spirit of fellowship and camaraderie which lies at the heart of our tradition will continue to prevail.

It was my distinct pleasure and privilege to serve as the club's president during the year 1986-1987--the year, incidently, during which the project of a centennial history of the club first began to take shape. It is an equal privilege and pleasure to write this brief introduction to the product of so many hours of research and effort by so many individuals. I should like to dedicate this introduction and the history itself with respect and affection to those who have gone before and those who will come after.

A. Malcolm Post, Jr.

1 October 1988  
San Francisco, CA

## INTERVIEW HISTORY

In June 1986, the University Club contacted the Regional Oral History Office of The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, to inquire about a way to document the club's first 100 years for its 1990 centennial celebration. Save for the accounts rescued by the club secretary, all of the club's early records had been destroyed, along with the clubhouse itself, in the 1906 earthquake and fire. Since that time, the club had maintained minute books and published a brief history in 1954, but the richest information lay hidden in the memories of its members. In October 1986, the University Club decided to underwrite a series of tape-recorded interviews with eight long-time members knowledgeable about the club's history. The interviews were to capture their recollections of the club's activities and members, and their observations of changes and continuities in club traditions.

Organized in this volume by date of interview, the series began on October 27, 1986, with Henry Hardy, an active and devoted member whose recollections furnished us with a wealth of information about the club and formed the basis for subsequent interviews. Interviewed in his home on three separate occasions, Mr. Hardy very carefully reviewed his transcript, rewriting some of it and adding substantial written portions on the real estate controversy with the Fairmont Hotel Company and the legacy of members prominent in San Francisco. Next came F. Barreda Sherman, who was interviewed in his home in Mill Valley. The club's oldest living member, Mr. Sherman added significantly to the record of the club's early history with colorful anecdotes relating first-hand experiences and the fruits of his personal research. Many of these recollections are printed in the transcript of a talk he gave to the University Club, included in the appendix.

The six members next interviewed had all served as club president, with collective terms covering the forties, fifties, sixties, and seventies. Churchill Peters, Chauncey McKeever, John Lewis, and Tindall Cashion were interviewed at the club, and Frederick Johnson and Theodore Eliot were interviewed in their homes. Each carefully reviewed his transcript and corrected it for accuracy.

Three interviews were added to the original eight to round out the portrait of the club and record the events surrounding the recent change in the club's all-men membership. Robert Morris, who was interviewed at the club, added the perspective of a younger club member. The group interview, conducted over lunch in the Director's Room at the club, brought together six former presidents who, along with others, had served on the Committee of Past Presidents. Joining Churchill Peters, Chauncey McKeever, and Theodore Eliot were William Sumner, Murray Smith, and Charles Noble, three not previously interviewed. Limited to six



participants only for manageability, the group forum was chosen as a vehicle for sparking memories, facilitating storytelling, and capturing on tape some of the camaraderie and good fellowship so many had spoken of. Concluding the series is an interview of October 5, 1988, with Ignazio Ruvolo, who was president in August 1988 when the club voted to amend its bylaws; he was interviewed in his law office. Each of the additional interviewees reviewed his transcript and corrected it for accuracy.

Near the beginning of the project, events elsewhere in the country were signalling changes that would soon be felt by the University Club and other private clubs in San Francisco. In February 1987, the New York State Court of Appeals upheld New York City's Local Law 63, ruling that men's clubs must open their membership rolls to women. Fiercely challenged by various state club associations on the grounds that it interfered with the constitutional right of association, Local Law 63 was the first ordinance of its kind to prohibit discrimination by any club that was not "distinctly private." Not considered such were clubs that had more than 400 members, offered regular meal service, and accepted payments from nonmembers. Other major cities soon followed with antidiscrimination ordinances of their own, and by the summer of 1987 the San Francisco Board of Supervisors had taken up discussion of the matter.

Statewide, private clubs were being hit on other fronts as well. Their liquor licenses were threatened by proposed measures in the legislature and by the State Attorney General's ruling in April 1987 giving power to the State Alcoholic Beverage Control Board to revoke their licenses. A month following the State Franchise Board's vote in June 1987 to end tax deductions for membership costs, the Assembly passed a bill disallowing tax deductions for business expenses incurred at private clubs that bar minorities and women. But the final blow did not come until November 9, 1987, when the San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed an antidiscrimination ordinance with provisions similar to New York's.

The University Club put the question of admitting women before its members in January 1988. In a close vote, the club decided to uphold its traditional all-men status but took steps to comply with the ordinance by terminating its acceptance of payments from outside sources. Further review of the issue was delayed until the United States Supreme Court handed down its decision on June 21, 1988, upholding the New York City ordinance. The club voted on the issue again in August 1988, this time deciding to amend the bylaws to include women members.

Because these events overlapped with much of the interviewing, the question of admitting women members and the future of private men's clubs became frequent topics. Many of the narrators had a heightened awareness of the club's legal predicament as well.

Lisa Jacobson  
Interviewer-Editor

Berkeley, California  
January 1989

Regional Oral History Office  
The Bancroft Library

University of California  
Berkeley, California

Henry G. Hardy

The University Club of San Francisco:  
One Hundred Years of Tradition and Change

An Interview Conducted by  
Ruth Teiser and Lisa Jacobson  
in 1986





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## HENRY GIFFORD HARDY

Born in 1901 in Chicago, Henry Gifford Hardy graduated from the University of Chicago in 1923 and Harvard Law School in 1926, and practiced law first in Chicago, then in San Francisco from 1937 to 1978. He joined the University Club in 1943, and is a life member. He is credited with rescuing the club's Hermes sculpture and with successfully settling the real estate controversy with the Fairmont Hotel Company.



BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name HENRY GIFFORD HARDY

Date of birth APRIL 11, 1901 Birthplace CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Father's full name HENRY WILLARD HARDY

Occupation TREAS. LIBBY, Mc NEILL, <sup>8 LIBBY-CHICAGO.</sup> Birthplace CHICAGO, ILL

Mother's full name KATHARINE BRYANT HARDY

Occupation HOMEMAKER Birthplace CHICAGO, ILL.

Your spouse HORTENSE WETHERBEE HARDY (DECEASED)

Your children HARRIET WETHERBEE [HARDY] SHERRARD - CH  
HOLLY GIFFORD [HARDY] HOLIDAY - BERKELEY

Where did you grow up? CHICAGO, ILL - SOUTH SIDE

Present community OAKLAND [ROCKRIDGE] CALIF.

Education PUBLIC GRAMMAR SCH. UNIVERSITY HIGH SCH. UNIVERSITY  
OF CHICAGO PH.B. 1923; HARVARD LAW. JD. 1926.

Occupation(s) GENERAL LAW CHICAGO 1926-1930; PATENT & TRADEMARK  
LAW-CHICAGO - 1930 - 1937; PATENT & TM. LAW - SAN FRANCISCO 1937-

Areas of expertise MECHANICS & INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW  
- STAMPS (Postage) U.S & HAITI; NATIONAL CHRISTMAS SEALS & EASTERN  
SEALS.

Other interests or activities UNIVERSITY CLUB - SAN FRANCISCO,  
PHILATELY, PAINTING - WATERCOLOR & OIL; WRITING.

Organizations in which you are active UNIVERSITY CLUB, S.F.; OAKLAND ART ASSN  
EAST BAY WATERCOLOR SOC. MARIN COUNTY WATERCOLOR SOC.; SOCIÉTÉ  
OF WESTERN ARTISTS; AMERICAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY.  
(SEE ATTACHED)





## HENRY GIFFORD HARDY

The freshness and color of the changing landscape, the preservation of historical subjects, the physical make-up and intellectual facets of a person inspire Henry Hardy to draw and paint; to capture the essence of life.

Motivated to interpret the beauty of his surroundings, Henry began to study art at the Art Institute of Chicago and the Audubon Tyler School of Art in Chicago while pursuing an education in Law. After receiving a Ph.B. from the University of Chicago and a JD from Harvard University, Henry practiced Law (general and patent) in Chicago for ten years. In 1937 he moved his family to California and began his Law specialty (patents, copyrights, trademarks) in San Francisco

where he made contact with Bay Area art groups who sought his legal advice. This contact rekindled his lifelong interest in drawing and painting, inspiring him to study once again. His teachers included fine Bay Area artists: Martha Borge, Richard Yip, Jade Fon, Harold Gretzner, Vernon Nye, Peter Blos and Henry Doane.

Today Henry enjoys drawing and painting full time after retiring from a fifty year Law career. His favorite activity is painting on location with artist colleagues, Henry Doane and Kenneth Siqueira. His spontaneous encounters with each weekly destination are continuous inspirations for his lively watercolors.

Henry has exhibited his work in all parts of the United States and especially in California. He has received top awards in the following exhibitions and places: Alameda County Fair, Mother Lode International Art Exhibit in Sonora, Statewide Judges and Lawyers Annual Art Shows, Los Angeles, Disneyland, Carmel, Oakland, San Francisco, San Leandro and Cape Cod.

His group affiliations are: Honorary Life Signature Member and Emeritus Trustee of the Society of Western Artists, Life Member of Eastbay Watercolor Society, Honorary Life Member of Oakland Art Association, Member of Richmond Art Center.

Significant honors include: listing in the Catalog of American Portraits prepared by the National Portrait Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. and the creation of a petite and elegant art gallery in the University Club in San Francisco which is named in his honor.









I HENRY GIFFORD HARDY

[Interview: October 27, 1986]##

Settling in California

Hardy: I first came to California in 1915 to visit both the San Francisco and San Diego Fairs, but came to "stay" in January of 1937. I really came to die, as I was advised medically I had only three months to live. I asked my doctor in Chicago where I should live in the West. He said, "There are only two places in California which I believe would be favorable for you. One is Berkeley and the other is Redwood City." He based that advice on climate statistics. I was born and raised in Chicago near the University of Chicago and I was comfortable in the college environment, so that is the reason I decided on Berkeley. I had no job and I didn't really know anybody. When I felt myself improving in health after coming to Berkeley I became restless. Then I tried to find a part-time job.

Teiser: Did you head towards San Francisco then for a job?

Hardy: Yes.

Teiser: You didn't stay in Berkeley?

Hardy: You see, I had been practicing patent and trademark law in my own firm in Chicago for about eight years. I did know one person in San Francisco: a law school classmate. We talked about working in his office and I was in his office for about two to three months. We formed a partnership in the interim. When I discovered that he had never passed the California Bar examination, I was amazed, because at that time a lawyer could not

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## This symbol indicates that a tape or segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes, see pages 276-77.

Hardy: practice in California, or even in the Federal courts, where patent and trademark cases were usually brought, without being a member of the California State Bar.

Teiser: When did you pass the Bar?

Hardy: I had already taken the California exam. The Honorable Ray Peters, who later was a Supreme Court Justice, tutored me in California law, and I passed on the first try.

Teiser: Was that when you first came?

Hardy: No, but very shortly afterward. I prepared myself for the California Bar Exam just to occupy myself. I never expected to practice law again full time. Then I was sent a case from Chicago by the 3M Corporation that took me down to Los Angeles. It was war time and there were many infringements in the aircraft industry. When I was investigating the matter down there, I received a letter from my erstwhile partner that there never had been any partnership between us and therefore the client [3M] was really his. Whatever was said in previous conversation and letters was "yesterday" and of no effect. I came home to Berkeley immediately, especially since it was Thanksgiving [1937], and to my surprise I found my desk out in the hall of the Russ Building. My mail and personal things were out there also, even the door locks had been changed. I had no place to go and, worst of all, I had no money. Frustration and disappointment were especially intense at this time of year. I have no doubt now that this action was intentional spite because I, as newcomer, would be superior in the handling of clients and their cases, because of my admission to the Bar.

Actually it was a very bad time for us, my wife and six-year-old daughter. I think our first Thanksgiving dinner here was a can of corned beef hash. Things were pretty tough. But I did go out and look for another job.

Then I really had an experience that I now relish very much, but it was out of desperation. In the first place, I knew I had a very good education having graduated from Harvard Law School in 1926. I knew from my experience in Chicago that I could hold my own in any court; it didn't make any difference. The good news that I received at Thanksgiving time was that I was formally admitted to the California State Bar.

Setting Up Shop in the Russ Building

Hardy: I now had all the prerequisites to practice, but I had no clients, no office to go to, no way to even write a letter except by hand. I knew that it was incumbent upon me to get an office and an address right away. The Russ Building was pretty well empty at that time because of the Depression and the state of the stock market. I knew the manager of the Russ Building, Mr. Patterson, very well, so I went to him with the request--"How about letting me have a room?" I said I would try to raise some money. "No," he said, "you had better get your money first." There wasn't anybody I could go to for a loan. I had no one here, and my father was not in a position to help me at that time. Since there was no alternative I just took the bull by the horns and went to the president of the Wells Fargo Bank, who was Mr. [Robert B.] Motherwell.

Teiser: Oh, not Fred [Frederick L.] Lipman?

Hardy: No. I told my story to Mr. Motherwell and he advised, "Well, what you have told me is a sound position, but we're not in a position to grant character loans. We haven't done that for many years." I said, "Well, is that all you can do?" He responded, "Perhaps you might talk to Mr. Frederick Lipman."

Mr. Lipman was upstairs in the office he had on the mezzanine. After a call by Mr. Motherwell to Mr. Lipman, I went up and repeated everything I had told Mr. Motherwell. Mr. Lipman was a very physically active, incisive man. After hearing my story he got out of his chair and looked me squarely in the eye and said, "I think you've analyzed your problem all wrong." I respectfully replied, "Mr. Lipman, I've spent at least six weeks doing the very things that you're saying I should do with no result, not even a murmur. I can't say that I disagree with you, but my experience has been quite the contrary. I need a place now." He quickly suggested, "Well, if you will go over and tell your story to Mr. Warren Olney, I would like to have his judgment." Mr. Olney had been a justice of the Supreme Court in the State of California and was then head of a very large firm in San Francisco. I said, "I don't know the gentleman, and I doubt if I could go in the office cold even to talk with him. Would you be good enough to have your secretary call him and arrange an appointment for me?" "Oh," he said, "I'll call him right now." So he made the call and gave the judge some idea of what it was all about.

Judge Olney was busy as the dickens when I got over to his office, but he saw me right away, and I told him the same things that I had told Mr. Lipman. He said, "Why, old Fred is just crazy. You've got your problem all set up. I think you've done a



Hardy: good job analyzing it and following through." I told the judge, "Well, I really can't go back to Mr. Lipman and tell him that you've said he was all wrong!" [laughter] "Could you do me the favor of calling him on the telephone and telling him anything you want." "Well," he said, "you start back over to his office and I'll call him in the meantime."

On arriving back at Mr. Lipman's office and before I could say anything, he stood in the doorway and said, "Mr. Hardy, here's a checkbook with \$1,500 to your credit. All I've got to tell you is: the less you spend, the less you pay back."

With my \$1,500 in hand, I went back to the Russ Building and signed a lease. Mr. Patterson took me through the various places in the Russ Building where they had stored furniture of defunct brokers, and I got all the office furniture that I needed for \$100. Mr. Patterson, who was manager of the Russ Building, then took me to meet James Naylor, Esq., who was also a patent lawyer and who had vacant office space. Everything was most congenial.

Teiser: How much were you paying in rent?

Hardy: I think I was paying about 20 cents a square foot. It was a small office. The rooms were 15-by-26 and cost about \$78 per month as I remember. This space had a glass partition about one-third of the way toward the entrance. I brought in a little typewriter desk, rented a typewriter and set up business. That's the way it got started. I don't think I spent all of the \$1,500 either.

Teiser: That's a wonderful story.

Hardy: But I don't think it could ever be repeated here again.

#### Law Practice in San Francisco

Teiser: Not now. It was a small community in San Francisco then.

Hardy: Oh, indeed it was. That's why I couldn't get any business. The business in San Francisco at that time was all controlled by a few families. Unless you knew somebody in one of those families or had connections with them, you just could not get any work. The Hardy family nearly starved for about a year. I don't know how or why I got work, but--

Teiser: Clients just came?

Hardy: Just came, and before long--within a couple of months thereafter, which is really a very short time--I had all the work, with real paying clients, I could do.

Teiser: What kind of law did you practice?

Hardy: I practiced patent, copyright, trademark and unfair competition law. I had practiced general law about half the time in Chicago with one of the big firms, Cutting, Moore & Sidley. I was very much dissatisfied with it, because I got all the dregs that nobody else wanted, being the low man on the totem pole. I got garnishments, answered court calls, kept the docket and added the supplements in the books. I didn't think I was accomplishing anything, except paying out money for things for which money settlements wouldn't be adequate at all. But we represented some very substantial companies, such as Illinois Bell Telephone, Kirk Soap Company, and First National Bank, etc. In reality I got a very basic training in the practice of law.

Teiser: Here in San Francisco, did you work alone then?

Hardy: I worked alone most of the time I was in practice. I believe I was the last sole practitioner in my field when I had to quit in 1978. Sometimes I made my clients' patent drawings, and even did the typing and the trial work.

Teiser: I see. An interesting field, too.

Hardy: Oh, I was always on the cutting edge of knowledge, things that were new and could either make or break the business, or at least start one. I had a great deal of enjoyment with it, because I was actually accomplishing something. I spent some time lecturing at the different universities, and taking part in symposiums and things like that. I tried cases in at least half of the states and worked in litigation in at least five foreign countries. I have two daughters who saw much of this country as I took one of them alternatively whenever possible and Mrs. Hardy and I saw a goodly share of this world together.

I loved my law specialty because I was working on business problems and not broker problems. Enforced retirement has not diminished this feeling.



## II THE UNIVERSITY CLUB

### Joining the Club

Teiser: When did you first come to know the University Club?

Hardy: Well, I was a member of the University Club in Chicago. Harold L. Ickes [later Secretary of the Interior under Franklin Roosevelt] had sponsored me for that. All the time after graduation from law school in '26 to '30, I was a member of the University Club in Chicago. When I came to San Francisco in 1937 I learned there was no reciprocity between the clubs, but I had an interest in that kind of an association--purely social.

The patent lawyers in San Francisco were generally either members of the Bohemian Club or the Engineers Club. My wife wouldn't let me belong to the Bohemian Club. She said it was the most selfish place that could be, and she would have nothing to do with it. My first partner was a member of the Engineers Club, so that was out. Accordingly, I just naturally sought among my then-clients, which were very few, and found out about the University Club in San Francisco. I joined that in 1940.

### Early Members

Teiser: What was it like then?

Hardy: It was war time and was very precarious. We had about one hundred members, and my first bill included my dues and an assessment, which I had not counted on, because it was war time and the University Club was on the basis of having to pay for everything in cash as it was delivered. Slightly more than one hundred members could not support that building and its expenses. But we did have some wonderful members who were able and willing to help out with our financial problems. Mr. [James K.] Moffitt was one

- Hardy: of them. I will never forget them or be too grateful to them. Too much cannot be said in favor of the ability of the officers and directors who did masterful jobs during these trying times.
- Teiser: Yes, Mr. Moffitt was a very vigorous member, wasn't he?
- Hardy: He kept us alive. So did Nathaniel Blaisdell, Cyril [R.] Tobin, Leon de Fremery, and Barreda Sherman.
- Teiser: Yes, a lot of bankers.
- Hardy: They treated me very, very well. They saw that I met everybody. They had their own tables in the dining room, which were sacrosanct, in the club.
- Teiser: This was for lunch?
- Hardy: Yes, at lunch. Dinners were pretty well filled. Oh, [H.] Clay Miller was another one who was there at the time. There were quite a few who lived at the club. That situation has since changed. At present we have no permanent residents that I know of.
- Teiser: When a young man came in, as you did, what table did you sit at at lunch?
- Hardy: I sat over at the table with the younger members, which was just catch as catch can. It was probably a good idea, because I met many more members that way.
- Teiser: Then did you gradually have a table of your own?
- Hardy: Oh, sure, you bet. Ray Van der Voort, Jack Booth, Arthur Frost, who had been chief consular officer in Ecuador and was retired, Tindall Cashion, and a few others sat together at what had formerly been Mr. Tobin's table. It was really the only reserved table in the dining room at this time.

#### Business Connections

- Teiser: Did people tend to group with other people in their own professions?
- Hardy: No, the professions were pretty well mixed. In fact, ever since I've been a member of the club, members and guests couldn't take any business papers into the dining room, or any of the generally used rooms.



- Teiser: Oh really?
- Hardy: No briefcases, even closed.
- Teiser: Could you entertain business guests?
- Hardy: Yes, we did, but only socially. The main purpose of the club is sociability.
- Teiser: But you couldn't write anything down.
- Hardy: No, that didn't amount to very much, because you know the motto of the Bohemian Club: "Weaving spiders come not here." We followed very much the same practice, and still do. Nobody talked business at lunch or dinner. Once in awhile they would get into some discussion, but generally not. It was just for the good fellowship that we joined the club.
- Teiser: Did people ever have business meetings in the other club rooms?
- Hardy: Oh yes, yes. Whenever we had committee meetings or meetings of members in their particular professional or social group, there were private dining rooms for that and other social purposes.
- Teiser: Mr. Elder [Desmond Elder, manager] told me that now there's a bankers' convention or something of the sort in the city, and that the club rooms were all in heavy use.
- Hardy: Yes. Well, over the years we've improved those rooms enormously.

#### The Early Days of the Club

- Teiser: When you first saw the club what did you think of it? How did it impress you compared to the Chicago club?
- Hardy: Oh, I thought that they were really all about on the same level, intelligent people of importance in and to San Francisco. It was all good conversation, usually about daily, routine things, sometimes just pleasurable experiences.

We had many of the military servicemen here in the early days of World War II. The military were all guests and allowed free use of the clubhouse and facilities. They had free drinks most of the time and ate at a discount and could bring in guests of their own.

- Teiser: This was during the war?

Hardy: Yes, World War II was within my personal knowledge. We had to have bodies to fill up the space. That was as good a way to do it as any.

Teiser: Was that both Army and Navy?

Hardy: Oh, all the services. Many of them became members later on.

Teiser: Did you lunch in the club almost every day?

Hardy: Almost every day. My office was just, of course, at the bottom of the hill. I had only a few blocks on the convenient California Street cable.

The dues and the entrance fees and other fees go up year by year. Now they're up in fairly substantial figures. But there are many, many more members now than we had then.

Teiser: Yes, I believe Mr. Elder said there are around 800.

Hardy: But they're not all active members. Some are non-residents. There are about 480 active and life members.

Teiser: Oh, I see.

Hardy: That's about the capacity that we can accomodate. There just isn't room or facilities for any more. If they all showed up I'm sure that we couldn't feed or take care of them all.

Teiser: Have you served on committees?

Hardy: I think I've served on all of the committees except the newest one, which is the Wine Committee.

Teiser: Is there a Wine Committee now?

Hardy: Oh, yes. There was none in the early days, and then there wasn't one all during Prohibition, of course. The Wine Committee is the largest committee now, and is very efficient and knowledgeable.

### Club Activities

Jacobson: Speaking of Prohibition, I understand that during the Prohibition years there were minstrel shows going on.

Hardy: Yes, and right after the Prohibition era, during the forties, they had what they call the Shambles. I've got one book, Songs of the University Club. They were pretty amateurish, but it gave them something to do, and it was all in the name of good fellowship.

Hardy: The activities among the members seemed to change over the years. In the early years they just met for the good fellowship. They enjoyed each other's company and that was it. That's how it got started. It stayed that way almost until the time of the earthquake and fire. Then they changed. The change involved closer sociability and greater status commercially and with this change came an unrelated writing of poetry about members of certain tables. In the library there are several books of poetry about individual members. They were really quite good. It also appears somebody had a close relationship with the Grabhorn Press, and the Grabhorn Press published these books in limited editions, which were then delivered to some of the members. How and in what manner is not really known.

After the new building on Powell Street was completed there was a frame structure across Miles Court with two squash courts, an exercise room, and showers for members only. This installation was not used very much.

After that the Shambles came along. Then that died out. In the war period the activities changed drastically. There was not as much of the close camaraderie, because the times were tough and diverting. I can remember there were holes in the cushions of the furniture and the drapes were kind of raggy. We called it "fragile gentility."

#### Hard Times: The Era of "Fragile Gentility"

Hardy: In fact, we didn't get around to restoring the furnishings in the present library until the sixties, when the debt to Stanford trustees was finally paid off. As Leon de Fremery so brilliantly reviewed in his last talk to the members in 1984, by 1943 World War II had begun to seriously take its toll financially on the affairs of the club. The mortgage, held by the trustees for Stanford University, was in serious jeopardy. Not only was the Club in default, but its situation was perilously near bankruptcy and something had to be done. Leon, who was president in this period, convinced the trustees that the principal should be reduced and regular payments should and could be made.

This required hard work on behalf of each successive club president until the debt was paid off in the fall of 1962. It was not done without visible effects, either: the furniture was run-down and much needed repairs were left undone. From 1962 on, for the next few years, the effort was to restore the physical plant and furnishings, which was partially accomplished. At least to the extent we were no longer apologizing for appearances.



Hardy: Long about that time, too, at the end of the war and after the war, the period when the United Nations was here, guests were at the club on many occasions. Kenneth Perry was my law school classmate, and he was the general counsel for Johnson & Johnson. Mr. Cyrus Eaton was at that time an owner of Johnson & Johnson and was on the U.S.A. delegation. They had several meetings at our club.

Teiser: I gather that the club rooms are still used by outside groups sometimes.

Hardy: Oh yes, but such use has to be sponsored and guaranteed by a member. Yes, I arranged one for the Hellenic Lawyers group about a month ago, about forty of them. They're all Greek in origin, so I was made an honorary Greek for the time being. When the United Nations was here, Lord Halifax ate here many evenings. He had a table he liked. No one bothered him, and no one would go over and engage him in conversation unless the member was invited by him. I was fortunate enough to be asked several times. He said he liked the club because it reminded him very much of the English clubs. I said, "Well, we're not quite so much spit and polish as they are."

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Teiser: Which ones?

Hardy: The Oxford club in London is a very, very nice place. That's an old club. I just love it there. Women can be guests, too. That makes it very pleasant if you're married.

#### Admission of Women

Teiser: At one time the University Club took women members, I believe. Was that within your time?

Hardy: No. That was a very interesting thing. Before my time--before the earthquake and fire, at about the turn of the century, when the Club building on Sutter Street was enlarged--there were facilities provided for women guests. It lasted only about six months. The women didn't come there. So the members concluded, "Well, if they won't come we'll use the space for other purposes." Everything was converted back to men only. Women didn't come again until Church Peters was president. That must have been in the early forties, around 1941. Then we allowed women to be entertained for dinner, provided they were escorted by the member. They could be guests, but that created a big hassle.

Hardy: Then during the time I was a director, which followed that, the question of women members came up strongly again, but this time a little more seriously. It was the first time that I was really aware of the sinister nature of the proposal. There were no adequate facilities for women at the University Club. One can hardly ask a woman to be a guest and then make no provisions for her. And there's no way we can change the present building to do so. So it's just really a physical impossibility to have them as members. We haven't enough room for all the men that want to be members, and we've never had a woman ask to be a member as far as I am aware.

It first came up when a member of the clergy at Grace Cathedral--he was pretty much a maverick--got some young man at San Francisco State to write and ask for a copy of our bylaws and what our rules were with respect to women. I was secretary at the time [1965-66] and I got that letter, which had to have some response. I remember talking it over with members and with the board. Finally, we decided to ask the question: what did he want them for? There was no response. It came out later, on another effort, that there was a group that was trying to stir up women for membership in the University Club, on the basis that they were now in business after the war and were being discriminated against because they had just as much right to be there as the men. Well, of course they had just as much right. But we never had any provision excluding them, just as we have no method now of excluding anyone, except through the Admissions Committee. Every application comes in and is judged on its merits, as we see it. So we've never had any exclusionary provision of any kind, except that the applicant must be invited and pass the committee.

Jacobson: What year was it, do you remember, when women first contacted the club?

Hardy: It was 1965 when this social business began to foment. This was the start of it, and it has come up several times since through oblique pressures. I've served on the special committees each time this issue has come up. I've been asked to do a lot of things I've disliked doing, and one was to have a vote. I think that voting is a divisive kind of procedure. It divides people into "for and against" camps. I think that is entirely foreign to our established scheme of things and we have done probably all we can do in our present circumstances.

We deal with a lot of women now, pretty generally. When we rebuilt the squash courts about three years ago, we built facilities for women in there. Women are allowed to go there for exercises or a game of squash. They have their own dressing room and their own shower and exercise rooms.

Teiser: Are they auxiliary members?

Hardy: No, they're not any kind of member. They're just allowed to use the facilities. They have to be wives or part of the adult family of a member. They're very nice facilities which we have provided.

Teiser: Is that a third squash court? Are there several?

Hardy: There are several.

### Literature and Arts Committee and Art Gallery

Hardy: According to the founding charter in August of 1890, the Literature and Arts Committee was one of the first three committees authorized by the bylaws. It has been responsible to the board of directors and has remained so until the Bylaws Revision of 1987, when nearly a hundred years of progress was wiped out.

Teiser: I read that there's a William Keith painting that has been there forever. What is the subject?

Hardy: The William Keith painting is one of the best-known of his works and one of his largest oil paintings. It was given to the club by Keith himself. It hangs in the main lounge above the fireplace. The story on that painting is that it was the only thing of real value that was saved from the earthquake and fire. It was cut out of the frame by Harold Wheeler, a co-founder of the club, so it's a little bit smaller than it was originally, but it's a beautiful, valuable painting.

Teiser: What is the subject?

Hardy: It's a rural scene featuring a large tree which Keith was very fond of doing. The painting contains a number of figures. We didn't know there were any figures in there until a number of years later when the painting was cleaned. It's a lovely thing.

Teiser: What else did your committee do?

Hardy: Well, you see, when the earthquake and fire came along, it not only destroyed the building which was then located at 722 Sutter Street, but it destroyed almost everything else. The only things that were saved were the account books and the Keith painting. Accordingly the members--at that time [1907] the present building at 800 Powell Street was being built--donated books for a new library. Some of the collection is in German, and some of



Hardy: it's in French. There's a very good section on American history and on British history. It has an excellent section on general literature, first editions and things like that.

The committee hired, at one time, the librarian at the Pacific Union Club to check our library, go through the catalogue, and see how many books were still there. In the Californiana section, we were losing rare books from the shelves at such a rate that it disturbed the committee. The committee finally put a screened door over the bookcase, with a lock on it, so that now anybody who wants to take a book out has to sign out for it.

It's a beautiful room, our library. It's all wood panelled, with book shelves on all four sides and an elaborate fireplace. It is apparent that it was patterned after the private libraries of the English manor houses.

Teiser: In the field of arts, did you hold exhibitions?

Hardy: [chuckles] Well, I'm a painter, using watercolors as well as oils. I took up painting as relaxation from my practice of law, because I felt that I was getting into a narrow rut and I needed a little diversion. The next decision was that if I was going to be a painter I wanted to be a good one. Accordingly, I made it a practice to study with many of the fine and well-known painters in the area who were available. I took every Thursday afternoon off from my office and never let anything interfere, even postponing trials so they wouldn't interfere with Thursdays. That started in 1954. In the meantime, I had to paint when I could get time, and study with the persons involved when they were available.

Soon I had a few paintings that I thought were worth hanging for an exhibit. The club had a place on the fourth floor, which we all called the Black Hole of Calcutta. It was a narrow hallway which branched into a T-shape, not a very large space, that went to the downstairs service elevator. There was nothing in the hallway, except a very dark painting by Rollo Peters which could not be seen even in good light. I suggested to the directors that if they wanted me to, I would hang a few of my own paintings in that little dark hallway to try to make it more inviting, if possible. The directors agreed and a few of my paintings hung there for several years. The first ones were hung in 1954.

I got tired of looking at them after such a long time, so I asked permission from the board [October 1964] to have shows of local artists in there. This portion of the gallery can only accommodate about thirteen paintings, thus it wasn't difficult to get artists of substantial reputation and various styles to exhibit. By that time I had come to know many of the artists in the Bay Area and had established access to others.

A few members painted, but we would schedule the showing of their work so that it wouldn't be too obvious. Then finally the committee decided, "Well, if we're going to have good painters we ought to have a good place to show their work." So the directors had the two hallways repainted and put in track lighting so the work could be seen to advantage. Now it's the best-lighted gallery in the city! There is no trouble in getting artists to show in this gallery anytime. The quality of the exhibits and the space have made it a very desirable gallery. This in spite of the fact that we have to have special rules for outsiders to view the works in the gallery.

Teiser: Do the shows go right along, or just occasionally?

Hardy: Oh, let's see. [Refers to printed material] Here are the listings of the shows and the artists that have been presented since the start, October 1964, together with brief write-ups of each exhibitor.

Teiser: My word!

Hardy: There were over 150 shows that I hung myself. I usually hung the new exhibits on the first Sunday of each month. These were nearly all local artists; together with a few members.

Teiser: Who could come to look at them?

Hardy: That raised some problems, because the bar is also on the fourth floor and the game room is likewise on the fourth floor. Also the main lounge is there. Women were never allowed up there, so we had to change the rules in order to take women up there, on Sundays at first, but then this did not work out. The families of the members could go up there at certain hours in the day. Now there are house rules extended to provide the means and the hours the public is allowed in the gallery. They come when they feel like it. It's just one of those things that gradually grows like Topsy.

Teiser: It's a wonderful idea. About how many paintings do you show at a time now?

Hardy: We show about thirteen. We have had some bigger shows than that though. I had a couple of painters from South Africa--a woman and her daughter, who exhibited about forty large paintings at one time. These two would go off for months at a time in a Land Rover Safari vehicle, and no one would hear from them for weeks. They never had a bit of trouble. Their specialty was painting the native dress of the various tribes in South Africa out in the native villages. I had to use three rooms for their show. They were quite remarkable women, though. They had plenty of friends, and were both exquisite, trained painters. I arranged a show for



Hardy: them at the University of Utah, and one at the Smithsonian Institution, and one up in Boston at the Atheneum. I think the paintings should have been bought by the South African government, because they will never be painted again, things are changing so quickly.

Teiser: No, I imagine not. When was this?

Hardy: Oh, this was from 1970 to 1978. I have some photographs of the gallery I would like to show you. [Begins to bring out photos] In 1981 the gallery was remodeled completely and made into a very special place. No expense was spared and the club is justly proud of this fine facility. September 1981 was the opening with a special dinner honoring the event and the artists who had exhibited there.

Teiser: Let's go on with your committee work, may we?

Hardy: All right, surely. To the delight of everyone, the Literature and Arts Committee has expanded its talents to several new features.

Through the efforts of Thomas Woodhouse, a circulating library of current books has been established as a regular feature, starting in 1979. New books are frequently suggested by the members and all new material is displayed in the lounge and the system finds great member support. Others, of course, have been of great help in organizing, improving, and operating this new feature.

Music and musical extravaganzas were sponsored in 1978 under the aegis of Jack Stuppin and these music nights have been extremely successful.

Also in conjunction with the Entertainment Committee, speakers lunches and dinners have also been of great popularity with speakers such as Ted Eliot, Lord Saint-Bride, Paul Erdman, Jim Halliway, and many others. This program, starting in January of 1980, has included our additional popular feature, Dialogs. These include small groups discussing any subject with a knowledgeable guest in a question and answer forum.

The Literature and Arts Committee members have worked very hard on these new features as well as the original art shows, to promote and achieve the spirit and practice of good fellowship upon which the club was founded.

In nearly all of the presentations of the Literature and Arts Committee, women are included and welcome.

Hardy: I have saved the best until last. In 1972 the directors passed a unanimous resolution naming the gallery the "Henry Gifford Hardy Art Gallery." This is the first time in nearly one hundred years that a member's name has been officially given to any part of the building. I am very grateful for this honor and, I said then as I do now, that I am further grateful that it was done in my lifetime so that I may enjoy it also. Several years later when the gallery was remodeled it was rededicated at a big dinner party at which my entire family was present.

#### Admissions Committee

Teiser: What other committees were you active on--if you had any time?

Hardy: I have been on a lot of special committees, such as the women's membership proposals. I've been on three different committees at three different times on this same proposal. I've been on the Admissions Committee.

Teiser: What are the criteria for admission?

Hardy: The criteria for admission are that the applicant must have attended a university at least two years, and he must be of good moral character. Candidates are recommended first by a member and sponsored in writing by another member. Both the proposer and the sponsor members have to appear before the Admissions Committee and answer any questions that may be asked. They have to be acceptable people. We've had all kinds of situations come up. There are some members who say they wouldn't stay in the club if that candidate was accepted, and of course we don't want that ever to happen. Fortunately this is very rare.

Teiser: Does the whole membership have a chance to vote?

Hardy: Yes, any member may object to any applicant and all objections are taken very seriously.

Teiser: What are the causes for people to be blackballed?

Hardy: Well, I think they have to be acceptable socially and to the membership. We have a few members who have never been to a university. But they must have done something for San Francisco or shown some particular initiative that warrants their acceptability. Then we have the clergy, for whom we have a special arrangement. The president of Stanford and the president of Cal are members ex-officio. Then we have special faculty and diplomatic corps members also.

Teiser: Do many faculty people belong now?

Hardy: Oh, sure.

Teiser: Both Stanford and Cal?

Hardy: Yes, and I do not know how many.

Teiser: How about USF?

Hardy: I don't know about USF. President Herbert Hoover was one of our members, and he was a good member. He attended some of the club functions.

Teiser: He was not the world's most convivial man.

Hardy: He was very quiet. But he left us a book that was written in Latin, Agricola or something like that.

Teiser: Oh, on agriculture. He and his wife translated it.

#### Club Artworks

Hardy: Oh, another thing about the library there. When I was chairman of Arts and Literature I found a secret place behind one of the bookcases. I was looking for a broom one day to clean up after some work and in the back of a bookcase right alongside a window I found a panel which opened. In it was an original elephant folio of Audubon's, Birds of America, a complete English edition. We needed some money very badly at that time, so we sold it to Warren [R.] Howell. He didn't pay us very much for it, but we kept four of the large prints for the club, which now hang in the dining room. I had two more of the small ones, half sheets, but I don't know where they went.

Teiser: You mean, Warren didn't insist that he have the whole volume?

Hardy: Oh, he insisted on having the whole book, but we wouldn't let him have it. I wanted some of the prints for club keepsakes. But oh, they're beautiful. They're so valuable now. I saw not too long ago one complete volume sold for over \$1 million.

Teiser: I wonder how it got there. Did you ever know?

Hardy: There's no record of it anywhere in the club. There are lots of things in that club that nobody knows where they came from. For instance, in the main lounge, there's a Tad [Thaddeus] Welch painting, the finest I think I've ever seen of his.



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Hardy: I think we have four or five of the original paintings that were given to us after the earthquake. We had the Tad Welch and a James B. Wandesford. The Wandesford was borrowed by Stanford University to exhibit in a show of early California painters.

Teiser: What subject is the Wandesford?

Hardy: Redwood trees, which he painted a lot. There's a [Chris] Jorgensen of Half Dome. We have one that we just cannot satisfactorily hang anywhere, and that's one of Sutter's Fort, about which I have spoken earlier, that was painted by the artist Charles Rollo Peters, who appears always to paint at midnight. It's so black one can hardly make out what it is. We've had it in the dining room, we've had it at the end of the hall on the fourth floor, we've had it in the main rotunda--everyplace. Everybody complains, because it just looks black and blank. I've had special lamps on it, all kinds of fixtures. You just can't see it.

#### Recollections of Hong and Wong

Teiser: I've read somewhere that there was a bartender or barboy who must have been well-liked, and someone commissioned a portrait of him.

Hardy: Yes, Hong. That hangs up in the bar today. The portrait is by Moya del Pino. There are two portraits of Chinese employees who are thus remembered for their long and gracious service. Our Chinese help has been marvelous. The other one is Wong, Lun Sun Wong. That's the last one that we had done. They're both fine portraits.

Jacobson: I think I remember reading that [L. S.] Wong exhibited a collection of calligraphy and Chinese art paintings.

Hardy: Yes. He's a third-generation Chinese calligrapher. I have one of his works of calligraphy in my home. It was a poem he wrote for and to me.

Teiser: What did he do in the club?

Hardy: Well, he worked in the dining room, and was a real leader. Prior to his services at the club he was the editor of the only Chinese newspaper in Chinatown. I've been over to his apartment in San Francisco several times. He has the finest private Chinese library I have ever seen in my life. Wonderful books! He has a special room engaged at Bekin's Storage all divided up into little cubbyholes. In each one of these cubbyholes there's either

Hardy: calligraphy or a Chinese painting. That's three generations of collecting. It's a marvelous collection. He has also given me one of his fine Chinese paintings.

### Squash Courts

[Interview 2: November 25, 1986]##

Teiser: We were wondering if others like you have brought specific interests, like your interest in art, to the University Club, as you carried yours over to arranging exhibits there.

Hardy: Well, let me tell you that it was thought that the same thing might be accomplished through squash. I have said before I have had a very qualified opinion of squash. It is not for all members, it's competitive and divisive, in my opinion.

Teiser: Was it through some specific members who were interested in squash that the squash courts were built?

Hardy: Well, here was the reasoning behind it. It was seriously asserted that it would bring in new members. We had to provide some sort of exercise equipment. After all, the original Bylaws Article I requires that the club is founded "to provide social and recreational facilities to the members." We have had over the years two small squash courts, but they have not been used to any great extent, because there was always a problem with leakage, noise, and other problems. Some of the monument builders wanted to make a new building and have new squash courts that were of squash association ranking. The building cost about two-and-a-half times what they budgeted and it brought a professional squash player into the club coterie. It uses about half of the club property for an exclusive forty members.

Teiser: Doesn't it also attract women, I understand?

Hardy: We have some women who play squash there, but very few. They have facilities there and I think that it merely represents an entering wedge for women members, to which I am thoroughly opposed.

Teiser: What's going to happen now that the Bohemian Club is going to have to use women as workers?

Hardy: The court case says they only have to employ women at the Grove. It has nothing to do with the main club. This is merely an employment program. It won't affect the membership or even the employment at the San Francisco clubhouse, at the moment, as I understand it.

Teiser: I see. So you won't get any fallout from that.

Hardy: Well, I hope not.

Jacobson: How did the squash courts for women come about in the first place?

Hardy: Well, the squash courts aren't for women; they are certainly not for the public. The squash courts are there for members, and members' families. They thought that with the younger members living outside of San Francisco largely, that the women could meet them there for dinner or slightly before dinner and maybe have a game of squash. It was a reason for having the members come in and use the club.

### One-and-a-Half Parties

Teiser: What sort of thing goes on that's free?

Hardy: Well, we have what we call a 1 1/2, which is a martini. But it's accurately named, 1 1/2 ounces of gin per drink. Those are free for the entertainment of prospective members.

Teiser: No wonder they come!

Hardy: That used to be quite an event. Then we dropped it when liquor became illegal, and now they've gone back to it.

Teiser: What does the 1 1/2 mean? What's the normal martini?

Hardy: A jigger of gin per drink.

Teiser: Oh, so this is a jigger and a half.

Hardy: Yes.

### The Prohibition Era

Teiser: As to drinks, let me ask something that occurred to me the other day. During Prohibition, with the locker system, that must have changed the social groupings in the club.

Hardy: During Prohibition our membership was exceedingly low, and it did bring candidates into the club, because we could serve a drink from the lockers. But in my opinion, it didn't do any harm because a good quality of guests came in.



Teiser: As I understood it—I may be wrong—you couldn't drink in the bar; there was no common room where you could drink.

Hardy: Oh, there was no common room at all.

Teiser: So you had to drink in private rooms.

Hardy: Yes.

Teiser: Did that make the club more segmented or break it down more?

Hardy: No, I didn't think it was divisive at all. I felt it was properly run. Of course, it was against the law, but there was practically no misuse of the hospitality.

Teiser: It didn't change the social character of the club?

Hardy: No, it did not.

Teiser: Where did people buy liquor for the club? Did they buy it individually, or did the club buy it?

Hardy: Oh, they bought it individually. They brought it in. We had nothing to do with the purchase of liquor.

### Entertainment

Jacobson: Were the minstrel shows an attempt to make the club more attractive to the members during Prohibition?

Hardy: As you probably realize, in the life of every group there is a change of emphasis from time to time. When the board came along or was in the making, we were very much on our own and had to provide our own entertainment. The minstrel shows came along at that time. The last one that I can recall was in 1946, and it was pretty flat. We had none of the talents of the Bohemian Club. We had no special musical members or the talents required, and the songs were always borrowed from the popular songs of the time. The lyrics were changed to meet our own needs. They were pretty good fun, but they got a little stupid. I personally felt that it wasn't the way to go. To be a real social club you didn't need anything like that. If you haven't got the talent, there's nothing worse, in my judgment.

That was just a phase that passed very quickly. It didn't last very long. There was another phase right after the earthquake and fire where the popular thing was to write sonnets



Hardy: or poetry in praise of certain members. It's pretty good stuff. Most of the books were privately printed by the members and were made up by the--

Teiser: Grabhorn Press?

Hardy: Yes. I've got a few of those books here.

Teiser: Have you? I came across one in the University Club library.

Hardy: Grabhorn? I think I have three of them here.

Teiser: Oh. I didn't know there were others. This was by a man named Breeze, called Round Table Sonnets.

Hardy: I think that he was one of the ones who was pretty good. Much of his stuff is pretty good. But there is one that is awfully funny. It covered a period in the middle thirties, and it was written about the members of the Round Table. Now there was one table in the dining room that held eight or ten, and that was reserved for this group. They ate there about every day as a group. Some of the members took to writing these little verses and sonnets and things about them, and they were awfully good.

Teiser: The sonnet form is pretty hard to write. That's surprising that they would have chosen that.

Hardy: Well, some of them were extraordinarily good. One was not in sonnet form, one was in verse form, about one of the men in the meat packing business or the food business. It was quite an important fellow up around Lake Tahoe. He had a summer home there. A crusty guy.

Teiser: Someone with California Packing Company?

Hardy: No, I think I can find it. [Gets up to look through material] [E. G.] Schmiedell. I don't have his here, but it's such a good takeoff on Schmiedell that I sent it to his son-in-law, and he thought it was the greatest thing he had ever heard of about his father-in-law. It really had him down pat. He was really a very fine Christian kind of man, but always very gruff in his dealings. But that was merely a put-on.

Now here's one. This is by Paul Broadwell Williamson.

Teiser: That doesn't look like a Grabhorn.

Hardy: No, this says "privately printed."

Teiser: It's very nice.

- Hardy: But they're just little kind of rhymes about California's missions.
- Teiser: Nice illustrations. El Camino Real.
- Hardy: This one is by Phil Duvall, who was a very well-liked member. He wrote about scenes of the time and his memories.
- Teiser: These are nice to have, aren't they?
- Hardy: They're just some little rhymes.
- Teiser: Were they given to all members, or just to your friends?
- Hardy: As far as I know, they were printed for all the members.

### The Round Table

- Jacobson: Speaking of the Round Table sonnets, I was going to ask how people sat at the tables and tended to mix. Did any particular groups sit at particular tables?
- Hardy: The Round Table was a special table for a group that came after James K. Moffitt's group, which included Mr. Nathaniel Blaisdell and H. Clay Miller.
- James K. Moffitt had a table of four. He and Mr. Blaisdell and two others always sat there. Later they went to the Round Table where Schmiedell and Cyril Tobin sat. Cyril Tobin was the last of that group to sit at the Round Table. He would come to luncheon and sit there all alone, put up the newspaper stand and read the paper while he had lunch.
- Teiser: Were there other tables in the dining room that were reserved that way?
- Hardy: There was one long table also in the dining room that was just for individual members, the kind of drop-in types that had no special group or guests. That's still there, but that's very seldom used.
- Teiser: Are most tables used by regular groups?
- Hardy: No. It's just random, just as they come in.
- Teiser: The Round Table—was that the only one then?
- Hardy: Yes, really the only one for the past ten years.

Jacobson: For how long was it an exclusive sort of table?

Hardy: Oh, I suppose it was Cyril Tobin's group about ten years, and afterwards with the group that I was with, probably another ten years.

Teiser: How had you achieved a place with that group?

Hardy: Well, you see, when Cyril Tobin left, that left a big table which was not being used. I was with another, smaller group that had another table right inside the door where we usually ate, and we just moved over to the bigger table because we often had to pull up chairs; it was pretty crowded.

In mentioning the tables of good fellowship and conviviality, at luncheon particularly, all was not confined to the dining room. One very important table in the bar on the fourth floor is called "the member's table." It is the first round table on the left as one enters the bar. However, the "slam dunk" of dice boxes on the table and the rattle of dice, with accompaniment of voices will identify it immediately. It was not until the early sixties that this table began to have real significance. The smell of delicious hamburgers and steaks from the grill next to the bar helped to entice attendance at luncheon. It was always a delight to listen to and take part in the diversions of anything which might come up. If it happened to pertain to the club the message always seemed to get back to the directors and frequently lead to action. The regulars were usually past presidents or committee chairmen, but no one was ever refused a seat and many times a table was added for an overflow. This is still active in almost two decades of operation.

#### Dominoes and Other Diversions

Teiser: Were there a lot of domino players?

Hardy: No, not a lot of them. There are a few dedicated ones. But they have a game room, and they play bridge or dominoes or backgammon. They are there pretty regularly. But most people don't have that much time to spend.

Teiser: What other diversions are there that club members have found?

Hardy: Oh, periodically, once a year, we have a golf tournament. And the same with the Frank Adams Memorial Skeet Shoot.



Teiser: Where do you play golf?

Hardy: At San Francisco Golf Club.

The clubs are feeling a very definite change, because the younger people coming in do not live in the city. When I first joined there was always somebody in the club until it closed at night, because the members lived largely within the San Francisco city limits. Now most of the members live outside San Francisco, and I think their wives want them to be at home. It's such a struggle to get home; they get home late enough anyway.

### The Hermes Statue

Teiser: I was speaking to Mr. Sherman last week and he asked me if I had seen a statue of Hermes, and I said no. He said that you had rescued it.

Hardy: This little book here gives the whole story of it.

Teiser: Can you just give a brief synopsis of it?

Hardy: Seated Hermes is a statue brought over for the 1915 World's Fair, as part of the Italian exhibit. The story goes like this: When the Fair was over, it was war time, and Italy couldn't ship the statue back because it was solid bronze, and the metal was useful in the war efforts. The U.S. Customs would not allow it to go back to Italy. As a memento of the Fair, several of the members purchased the statue and donated it to the club.

We put it first in the rotunda on the fourth floor. However, a fire department inspector said that the building code did not permit this location, because the underlying structure was not strong enough to hold it; if there was a fire, it would fall through to the basement.

They made us take it out of the fourth floor rotunda, and it was put in what was then called the trunk room, in the basement. It was then the custom that members who resided in the club had a trunk stored down in the basement. They would store winter and/or summer clothing as well as mementoes. The trunk room was not crowded, so Hermes stayed there for a number of years.

Finally, when Mr. Schaeffer came along as manager he couldn't find any use for the statue and didn't want it, so he had it taken out and placed in the alley behind the club, Miles Court. It was in the way and getting hit by trucks and everything else. I knew it wouldn't last very long in that location.

Hardy: I went to the president, who was Tindall [E.] Cashion, and suggested that we put it in the area between the squash court building, as it then existed, and California Street. Tindall suggested we make a little professionally designed park there. We got the directors' permission to do just that, and it was quite a nice setting. It turned what was formerly a briar patch and dump into a nice little park. A very small park, but beautifully done and it attracted quite a bit of attention. We had a bronze plaque made and placed so it could be read from the sidewalk. I was surprised at the number of people who stopped to read it.

Then one Friday night, December 19, 1974, it was stolen. Nobody really knows how the thieves got it out of the little park, as Hermes weighed some four hundred pounds and there was a five-foot link fence around the park. It was actually mounted in the park about four feet below the street level. The gate to the park on California Street was locked, and on close examination we couldn't find any marks of any jimmying of the lock or anything else. It was done apparently in the middle of the night, and I still don't know how somebody didn't see the actual moving of the statue.

I called the police, and the police came over and after looking around said, "Oh well, forget about it. We have the same thing happening in the Golden Gate Park all the time. We never see the statuary again; they melt them up for the metal." I didn't like that as an answer. So I got permission to go to the newspapers and the TV stations, and Herb Caen wrote a piece in his column. Although Herb Caen does not particularly favor the University Club, he and I have been friends a long time, so he put quite a paragraph in his column in the San Francisco Chronicle.

We waited. Time went past Christmas and towards the New Year. Mrs. Hardy and I were sitting at dinner with Dr. Frank H. Pierce and his wife, Pat, at his home, when a telephone call from the club advised that the statue had been discovered. I was to call a young fellow by the name of Sheridan. Well, at 7:00 pm on a Saturday night it was a little difficult to handle. Everybody was away, and I thought, this might be a phony.

I called young Sheridan, and he said that he had found the statue at a party the night before. He and his friends had moved the statue into the Haight Street area, and he asked me to please come and get it because it was blocking his doorway and he couldn't get upstairs to his apartment. I responded, "How did you get it there?" and he said, "Well, four of us carried it." I said, "I don't see how four people could carry that." I asked if it was damaged and he said as far as he could see, it wasn't damaged. He further stated that it was a lucky thing that he saw it at this party because it was covered by a lady's fur coat in



Hardy: the host's apartment, and was about to be shipped the next working day to Florida. He had sold it for \$4,000. I said I was not about to pay \$4,000 for it.

I countered, "You make arrangements and let me know." He called me back later that evening and said if I came and got it Sunday morning, there would be no money involved. I replied, "Well, are there any other strings attached to this?" He said, "None at all; you'll have to just come and get it and don't ask any questions." He wanted a release from any police investigation. I said, "If you didn't have anything to do with it, that's all right with me." "No," he said, "I can prove that I was away on a vacation over Christmas." He said, "I found it at this party and I had nothing whatever to do with it except to identify it as stolen, and bring it over to my place."

So I got four big strong black men and a truck and on Sunday we went over to Sheridan's. My wife was really worried about the whole thing. She cautioned, "This may be a set-up; you can't ever tell." We found the statue just as stated. I checked it over and there was no particular damage. There were a few scrapes, but that's all. So I got it and brought it back to the club. That's the time we had it mounted and set up in the park. It's there now.

Then another thing is, earlier I had put an ad in the newspaper that I would like to have the statue back, no questions asked. Shortly after the statue's return I had a letter from Eureka, California, that said they had a statue there that was in the 1915 fair by this same artist, and they thought it might be the missing one. I telephoned them and asked them to send me a picture of it, and they did. It wasn't anything like "Resting Hermes." But later on, after I had our own statue set up, I got a notice from Harvard Medical School--it was a descriptive folder about the medical school--and in it was a picture of Hermes! It was exactly the same thing, only not as well done.

Teiser: Another casting of the same?

Hardy: I don't think so. I don't see how it could be another casting, because it is by no means of the same quality. It's the same configuration and pose, and about the same size. But Harvard didn't know who gave its version of "Hermes" to them or when. I was anxious to see if it came from the same foundry.

Recently, Hermes was run into and knocked down by a car that came down the California Street hill backwards because of a brake failure. A young couple who was in a rented car hit it. It didn't do Hermes any damage, but it squashed the pedestal, and scared the wits out of the occupants of the car.

Club Managers

Teiser: You mentioned a Mr. Schaeffer. Was he one of the club managers?

Hardy: He was the manager of the club for quite a while.

Teiser: Who have been the notable managers whom you have known?

Hardy: Oh, I have known them all ever since I became a member. We have had professional managers, but when I first became a member club members were managers. That was a very unsatisfactory thing. Having a member as a manager was just no way to run a club at all. There were lots of small favors dished out. We got no benefit out of it.

There have been several professionals since, but Schaeffer was probably the most notable. He was an ex-Marine, and he was pretty ruthless in his handling of the help and the suppliers. However, he really did give us some very good new direction.

Teiser: Were there some notably good ones?

Hardy: The one we have now is exceptional, Desmond Elder.

Teiser: What was his background? We were wondering how you get to be manager, how you're trained.

Hardy: We belong to the club management group, where all the club managers meet and discuss their problems and try to work them out. That includes the Bohemian and the Family and the Pacific Union Club up on the top of the hill there.

Labor Unions

Teiser: You all have similar problems, I suppose.

Hardy: Oh yes. We try to reconcile the situation, particularly with the unions. For example, we had Filipino and Chinese help, almost entirely, and they got along fairly well, better than I would expect. But we deal with eleven unions, and we may have only one person in a union, but eleven of them is a terrific number. The waiters' union, the cooks' union, the engineers' union, the office help union, the clerks' union--oh, it's a mess so far as clubs are concerned.

Teiser: Do the clubs bargain together?



- Hardy: Yes. We try to keep it leveled out, although we don't all have the same problem: Pacific Union had only Filipino help at that time that I was concerned with it. Our help is primarily Chinese now.
- Teiser: What does Family Club have?
- Hardy: I don't know; I haven't been in touch with them for several years. They had Negro help for a while. In our case, the unions wouldn't accept either Chinese or Filipinos in the union.
- Teiser: Oh yes, that's right!
- Hardy: So we solved that by paying our help the same wages and contributed the equivalent of the dues to the union.
- Teiser: Will they accept them now?
- Hardy: No.
- Teiser: They still won't?
- Hardy: No. But we've never had any trouble since we pay into the various unions the fees that they demand. I think we've only had one strike in the last twenty years.
- Teiser: What was that?
- Hardy: Well, that was over wages. The union tried to force the Chinese and Filipinos out of the club. They were not in favor of it at all, but the deliveries stopped, you see. We couldn't get food in or garbage out, things like that.
- Teiser: Your food is said to be the best in the city. Is it?
- Hardy: I think it's awfully good, and the service is exceptional.
- Teiser: Maybe that's one of the reasons you have so many loyal members.
- Hardy: Well, I think that may be part of it, although the dining room has always been a problem. That's the one thing in our club that just never gets enough patronage. As the people have moved out of the city, the evening meal situation has dropped off considerably. We have to have more things going on like lectures. The other night they took me over to a Mozart concert. We tried slides for a while; most people are bored with slides.
- Teiser: You allow women for dinners.
- Hardy: Yes.

Teiser: So people can have guests?

Hardy: We allow women in the rooms that are rented. We have a lot of rooms that transients use.

Teiser: You allow women to have rooms overnight, you mean?

Hardy: Yes. We did that because we found that if we didn't we could not get reciprocal rights with other clubs.

Teiser: What other clubs do you have reciprocal rights with?

Hardy: Oh, they're all over the world, and all over the country. Like the University Club in Chicago--they have beautiful accommodations for women there.

### The 830 Powell Street Caper

Jacobson: How did Ben Swig come to be involved in the affairs of the University Club?

Hardy: He was the owner of the Fairmont Hotel, and I believe he had a scheme all worked out to put the University Club in a financial bind that they could never meet, and it got us into a legal bind that wasn't resolved until 1971.

I have written this up for the club, which I have dubbed "The 830 Powell Street Caper." Also I prepared a written statement on this situation. It was the only accurate information which was furnished to the club members at the time. [See appendix, pages 278-85]

[The following is a full reprint of Mr. Hardy's written account of the controversy surrounding adjacent Nob Hill property.]

### THE 830 POWELL STREET CAPER

One of the most serious and potentially destructive periods in the long history of the University Club of San Francisco started with a very innocent and apparently unimportant event which gave no indication of the seriousness of the subsequent confrontations. The City of San Francisco put up a street name sign sometime during 1968, for the "dead-end street" Miles Court, the alleyway which is the service access for the Club and separates the Squash Court buildings from the main building. This was beginning to be used as a public parking area frequently

blocking deliveries to and removal of garbage and other discards from the Club.\* The "short street" was thus unilaterally declared, as it appeared from this action of the city, to be a city street. But was it a city street? The police of San Francisco said "no." It was not the required 40 foot width (being only 25'-6") and it was full of chuckholes with pavement breaks which the city refused to repair because it was not a city street. Nevertheless, the Fire Department said the street had to be kept open whether it was a city street or not, to provide access to the rear of the 22-foot-wide apartment building at 830 Powell Street, next door north of the Club building.

The members had always been told, and it was assumed, that the matter of title to the alley way had been "researched" by one of the Club members, and it was noised about that nothing could be done about the inconvenience of the public parking and the blockage of the entrances to the Club on the alley, as the city would do nothing, and the police would not enforce "no parking."

It is reported in the early history of the Club written by Mr. Blaisdell that at a special meeting of the membership on May 27, 1919, "the Club voted against acquiring the apartment house and the lot adjoining its northerly line"—which had been offered it for \$22,500—and the option was allowed to lapse.

The history and title to the property adjacent Miles Street (or Court) cannot be understood without reference to the maps and such other original documents as remain of record. They were reviewed almost in toto in a memorandum without any knowledge of or disclosure to the University Club, from Robert Merritt to John Steinhart, attorney for Ben Swig, dated January 2, 1969.\* It was therefore necessary for the University Club to start from the beginning in its investigation.

The history of Miles Steet predates 1849, when it was part of Square Lot No. 124, 137-1/2 feet in each direction at the northeast corner of Powell and California Streets and the property of William Miles. In 1849 Miles divided this property into two equal parts with an open strip 25-1/2 feet wide down the north-south middle, commencing at California Street and extending down

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\*There was one persistent tenant of 830 Powell who parked his car at night in from of the Club's service door in spite of the "no parking" signs. One night garbage was poured all over the car; then scratches appeared from dragging garbage cans across the top of his car, and next his tires were slashed. This was too much for him and he sued the University Club and the two night maintenance men. When it came before the Municipal Court the suit was dismissed because there was no proof of guilt, and rightly so.



to the northerly line of the lot. Miles then divided each of the two equal sides into six equal transverse small lots, 22 feet wide, making a total of 12 equal lots.

During the years 1849 to 1851, Miles conveyed all of the smaller lots to various persons. Each of the conveyances, except three, contained a diagram of the property showing the division into 12 lots and the median separation, with the following statement set forth:

The owners of the allotments on the above plan of Lot No. 124 may close the alley on said above plan and divide the land it contains equally among all of said allotments, that is, into 12 equal shares, by general agreement in writing, at any time, said agreement to be recorded.

The assessor's records of 1906, which still exist, showed Lots 11 and 12 owned by Sophie Gilfillan, Lots 7-10 by Vienna B. Turner, Lots 1-5 by the Trustees of Stanford University, and Lot 6 by Mary Marsily [Marsley].

In 1906 the Marsily lots, numbers 1 to 5 inclusive, which were once occupied by Leland Stanford's stables, were acquired by the Trustees of Leland Stanford Jr. University. On May 28, 1908, these five lots were chosen for the site for the new University Club House. Arrangements were made June 6, 1908 with the Stanford Trustees for the construction of the new (present) Club house. The four-story brick building constructed in 1909 was the design of Bliss and Favelle (who also designed the St. Francis Hotel) and is a variant of the Renaissance forms. The strongly arched portal, arched windows and large overhanging cornice were designed to give the genuine resemblance of an Italian palace, although the material was brick rather than stone.

The Gilfillan lots 11 and 12 were specifically involved in litigation in 1904 entitled Gilfillan v. Shattuck 142 Cal 72. Suit was brought by Sophia Gilfillan to stop Phoebe Shattuck from destroying a fence which she, the plaintiff, had erected across the northerly end of Miles Street, along the northerly lot lines. The status of this street was thus directly involved. Mrs. Shattuck's position was that it could not be closed off with the fence because in 1899 it had been declared to be a city street.

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\* It is interesting to note that this information was in Swig's hands before he bought the Sheldon property (830 Powell Street) March 14, 1969, but it was not made available to the University Club until August 14, 1969, nearly six vital months later.

The court did not agree, and held that it was a private right-of-way and that the city had no right to claim it as a city street because it had never been so dedicated by the owners. The court pointed out that Mrs. Gilfillan had a contingent right to have absolute ownership of her proportionate part of Miles Street under the statement in the deed, although this fact did not enter into the decision.

In May 1924, the Club purchased the inner lots 11 and 12 of Miles Court from Mrs. Flynn for \$12,500, which gave the Club a 44-foot frontage on Miles Court and a depth of 56 feet toward Joice Street. The Turner lots 7, 8, 9 and 10 were also acquired giving the club title to all of the lots on the east side of Miles Court. This was all part of the renovations and improvements in the Club which were begun in 1923. These purchases gave the Club occupation of a 50 vara lot with the exception of 830 Powell Street. It was thought from time to time that owning a 50 vara lot would be advantageous to the Club; and various efforts, none too serious, were made to acquire this small apartment and the land, 830 Powell Street, including the option of 1919, with no success, and each time the price was ever increasing.

The apartment and land of 830 Powell Street in the course of time became the property of an ailing widow Mrs. Sheldon, who dealt with the Club through her attorney, asking astronomical amounts for the purchase. Having no success, Mrs. Sheldon willed the property in the event of the failure to obtain her selling price of \$250,000 net, as a donation to the American Cancer Society, acting through her attorney, Brent Abel. Mrs. Sheldon died shortly thereafter.

Reasonable conjecture has it that, for whatever reason, Ben Swig made a deal for the property with Mrs. Sheldon's attorney for the full price of \$250,000, March 14, 1969 and offered the directors of the University Club a so-called joint venture in this particular arrangement, for one-half of the purchase price, plus costs and plus other open-ended items. This was considered, adopted and even signed by the chief Club officers in secret, thus binding the Club, without even being sure of what Mr. Swig's deal really was. Not all of the directors agreed with this action, as there was one holdout, Dr. Frank H. Pierce. Dr. Pierce brought a copy of the executed document to the writer for his opinion, both as to the desirability of the transaction itself as being in the best interest of the Club, and also with respect to the legality of the deal as being in accordance with the by-laws. After careful consideration, both determined that the secrecy which shrouded the arrangement could not bind the members, as such matters required the approval of two-thirds of the active and life members under the by-laws, which approval had not been obtained. Accordingly, the transaction was illegal right from the start.



The agreement with Swig which the directors had for consideration and we had for study was actually a fait accompli, having been executed April 2, 1969, by Richard Swig and G. Mendoza on behalf of the Fairmont Hotel Company and by William B. McColl, Jr., President and S. H. Woolcott, III, Secretary, on behalf of the University Club.

At about this same time, the Annual Meeting of the Club had been announced for May 21, 1969, by President William B. McColl, Jr. The notice contained no mention of the Fairmont Hotel (Swig) agreement, and stated only that the Miles Court was

classified as an unattended public street subject to all traffic regulations, such as limited parking and tow-away. It is not the property of the Club and we have no jurisdiction over who may park there.

The membership was not aware of what had happened and no attempt was made by the directors to advise them of the executed Swig agreement.

Written conclusions against the validity and even the advisability of the agreement and the supporting reasons for them were given to Dr. Pierce by the writer later in April of 1969. Time was getting short before the Annual Meeting. In summary, it was the writer's stated opinion that it was the most ill-advised and illegal agreement he had ever seen in 40 years of legal practice, and that it was basically dishonest by both parties, as well as a gross violation of the by-laws. Dr. Pierce was further advised it would not be wise for him to sign it, or do anything which would even approve it, because he could become personally liable for any adverse consequences. It was also suggested that he refuse to approve the agreement and to make his refusal of record in the minutes. These were all duly entered in the directors' minutes before the annual meeting. Again the directors were made aware of the illegality of their action, and Dr. Pierce immediately advised the membership that an agreement had been signed for the purchase of 830 Powell Street.

After Dr. Pierce's announcement, the matter was no longer a secret, and the directors on April 28, 1969, mailed to the members a two-page plus summary of the agreement. This summary set forth that "the Club had long sought to acquire the Sheldon property and thus to close Miles Court."

Since Mrs. Sheldon had died without heirs, her executors had offered the property for sale at \$250,000, net; but because the property was appraised at only \$125,000, no offer had been received, and title to it was about to pass to the American Cancer Society. However as stated earlier herein, on March 14, 1969, the

Fairmont Hotel Company had met the offer and had paid \$30,000 down, the balance due being represented by a year promissory note of \$220,000, payable \$900 per month principal, and interest of 3-1/2%, with a balloon payment at the end of the term. Discussions were had by some of the directors with the Swig interests, and an addition to the agreement was drawn up obligating the Club to pay one-half of all cash payments which Swig had paid and was to pay, including payments for rehabilitation and administration of the apartment building. Fortunately, the initial venture had to be scrapped because it did not conform with certain provisions of the deed of trust. Accordingly, the new meetings were had by some of the directors (again in secret), and a new agreement was drawn up and signed by the parties. Still the new signed agreement was not available to the membership and no one except the directors were aware of any of the details of this agreement. It was a copy of this agreement that was given to the writer by Dr. Pierce. The directors made a bank borrowing of \$25,000, without notice to the membership, which was paid to the Fairmont as a down payment, pursuant to the signed agreement.

On May 12, 1969, nine days before the Annual Meeting, the directors mailed to the membership a "Report to the Membership," about the existence of the agreement, but adding a few details which exposed the Club's obligations with respect to the costs of reconstruction improvements, operation, acquisition costs, etc., which were said would be no more than an additional \$40,000 up to December 31, 1970. The final portion of the report stated that "representatives of the Club are presently working on the final language of the documents." This was stated in the report although the directors knew full well at that time that the basic agreement had been finalized and signed for more than 30 days, binding the Club, and no agreement had as yet been shown to the membership whatsoever.

To say the least, many of the members were concerned with the lack of substance and candor of this "Report to the Membership." Furthermore, the membership also knew the club had no such money available in any circumstance, and that such an issue was very likely to cause a serious division in the membership pro and con which could lead to unpleasanties, and perhaps an actual court fight. The opposition was well aware that the latter were to be avoided in all events, as we did not wish to wash our laundry in public as the Olympic Club had done, and the Press Club had done.

Those who opposed the plan wanted the opportunity to study the situation, its advisability, and the documents involved. In the course of the inquiry, they obtained a copy of a letter dated April 7, 1969, to Chauncey McKeever, written by Southall R. Pfund in favor of the agreement and joint venture. In this letter, it was learned for the first time that the agreement did not accomplish the purpose of closing the alley known as Miles Court,



(one of the main objectives intended) but rather gave the Fairmont Hotel Company a permanent easement; that although the agreement stated that the Fairmont Hotel could not sell or dispose of 830 Powell Street without prior written consent of the University Club, this was an ineffective and meaningless provision, and that the Club was solely at the mercy of the Fairmont Hotel Company, that the Club was open-endedly liable for one-half of all of the cash outlays in connection with the Fairmont's purchase and that although the Club did not have sufficient finances to meet this obligation, all sums were payable on demand by the Fairmont Hotel Corporation, and that Pfund recommended that "we do nothing at the present time to undo what has already been done."

The Annual Meeting of the Club, held on Wednesday, May 21, 1969 was on schedule and was most unsatisfactory. Written questions were prepared by the opposition and directed to the Board of Directors at the meeting. From the answers it was obvious that the board members individually had not been informed completely, nor had the directors informed the membership concerning the underlying facts, and worst of all most of the directors did not know the details of the agreement or what they entailed. Through a maneuver of the directors using Roberts Rules of Order the meeting was prematurely adjourned.\* The new president, Captain Lewis, requested time to further study the situation and ascertain the facts. He promised the membership a full meeting on this agreement within 30 days. The promised meeting was never held and no constructive communication concerning the facts was sent to the membership except that on May 29, 1969, the directors stated that the objections of the membership were conveyed to Mr. Swig and they "had received assurance from the Fairmont that it would release the Club from its agreement should the Club members vote in the negative." This statement came in a letter to the membership, May 29, 1969, eight days after the meeting of the new directors.

However, in anticipation of the promised meeting in 30 days, the opposition set about to further ascertain the basic facts. The opposition, through the diligent and unstinting help of Frank J. Baumgarten, assembled the real estate records concerning all of the property and the record title. The title situation was clearly laid out, together with the reported legal opinions with respect to this very property, including the Flynn property

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\* Just prior to the Annual Meeting McColl had agreed that Dr. Pierce had earned the honor and should be the new president of the club, but in the meeting with the new directors immediately following, he persuaded them to elect Captain Lewis as the new president because Dr. Pierce would not support the dealings with Swig.

especially, which was involved in Gilfillan v. Shattuck, 142 Cal. 17.(1904). All of this was reported promptly by the opposition to the directors and occasioned the following.

On behalf of the opposition Churchill C. Peters suggested by letter June 11, 1969 to the directors that at least one member of the opposition be added to the "Committee to Report on 830 Powell Street Acquisition by the University Club," but this was not done. The committee membership was not identified, but its report, dated June 12, 1969, on the Henderson-Boston Company Inc. stationery, contains definite recommendations, concluding that if Mr. Swig was unwilling to agree to all of their recommendations, the Club should withdraw from the agreement and secure the return of the Club's money already paid to the Fairmont.

With the confirmed facts in hand and the present demands of Mr. Swig made clear, it was the belief of the opposition that the membership could not vote intelligently unless they had both sides of the various questions fairly presented. So far, only the directors had access to the membership list and only its views were circulated with the supposed facts, which changed from time to time, and so a request was made to have the mailing list made available to the opposition for circulation of the opposing position and views. This request was made to the directors in writing on June 16, 1969. The directors refused, ordering the office staff of the Club not to furnish the opposition with any list of the membership or addresses of the members. This greatly complicated the work of the opposition, but nevertheless, in time a full and complete list of names and addresses of the membership was compiled independently.

Gregory Stout, at the request of the new president Captain Lewis, wrote a letter dated July 18, 1969, to John F. O'Brien, executive director of the American Cancer Society, advising him that a discrepancy had been discovered between the terms of the promissory note which was now attached to the agreement and under which the Fairmont and University Club jointly paid some \$40,000, and were obligated for the balance, and the provisions of the deed of trust. But why was this being pressed when it was not a relevant issue? Mr. Swig's attorneys advised the Club that title to the property would remain in the Fairmont Hotel Company until this conflict had been resolved. There is no reply in the file, but it is assumed that Swig was unrelenting. It was now very apparent that Swig never intended to have title to any portion of 830 Powell Street pass to the University Club under any agreement.

In the meantime, again with the invaluable help of Frank Baumgarten, and Transamerica Title Co., the opposition assembled the complete group of certified documents supporting the opposition's position with respect to 830 Powell Street and the title to all of the Miles property. They were delivered in person



to Captain Lewis, with certified duplicates to Philip Diamond Esq., who had been hired as attorney to represent the Club, together with a letter dated July 18, 1969. It appeared from the recorded documents that Mrs. Sheldon's predecessor in title, as well as all other owners abutting Miles Court including the University Club, had filed a McEnerney suit.\* By these judgments, each owner of the property abutting on Miles Court had from the very start divided up the aliquot portions of the alley way with the property on the west side taking title to the middle of the alley and the property on the east side also taking its proportionate share of the title on the east side of the alley. Accordingly, the Sheldon property which the Fairmont had bought was bound by this election of all the property owners and could take title only to the middle of the alley on the west side behind 830 Powell Street. Also, it was perfectly obvious that the Sheldon estate could not create and/or convey to the Fairmont any easement over the alley owned by the University Club, which had taken full legal title from the former owners. The title insurance company on behalf of the University Club confirmed that the fee title to Miles Court could be established in the University Club now by a McEnerney judgment and a disclaimer by the City and County of San Francisco, and could have been so established in 1943, or perhaps as early as 1912. It seems astounding that, this situation having been of public record since 1904, no one who had been entrusted to investigate the matter on behalf of the Club had brought it to the attention of the University Club and its members.

In this same letter of July 18, 1969, to Captain Lewis, it was suggested that, in view of this situation, request should be made of Mr. Swig to redeem his promise to cancel the present agreement and to repay to the University Club the \$25,000 it had expended thus far under a mistake of law. The letter by the opposition also requested that after securing this release, the firm of lawyers representing the Club should file a McEnerney suit with respect to Miles Court, which would permit the Club to close the alley against all comers. The opposition pointed out there was every reason to believe it would be successful. About this

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\* Mary Marsily McEnerney judgment, recorded April 27, 1908, Book 17: p. 147; Joseph Flinn McEnerney judgment #7340 recorded May 13, 1909, Book 18, p. 344; Geo. W. Turner McEnerney Decree February 5, 1913 Book 146, p. 128; University Club judgment #41806 November 5, 1943, November 6, 1943, Book 587, p. 167; Brent Abel to Fairmont Hotel Deed, March 14, 1969 recorded April 9, 1969 Book B327, p. 191.

time the Club office advised that its files relating to Miles Court had disappeared and could not be found. It is still missing.\*

An unsigned letter bearing the date of May 15, 1961 and the name of Lewis Walker, appearing for the first time after being obtained by the opposition, was a status report of Miles Court to the University Club. This status report, referring to some of the documents furnished by the opposition to Captain Lewis, confirmed the validity and conclusions of the opposition with no exceptions. The report, addressed to Charles Noble, the president of the Club at that time, and surprisingly dated May 15, 1961, which is long before Philip Diamond and his firm were employed by the University Club, did not surface until a secret directors meeting August 19, 1969, over eight years later.

This report points out and confirms that the deed to lots 1 to 5 inclusive on the western side of Miles Street, owned by Mary Marsily, claimed in her deed that the title extended to the center of Miles Street. This is the property on which the main building of the University Club now is located. The McEnerney Act was adopted by the state legislature for the special purpose to quiet title to parcels where the records were destroyed in the earthquake and fire of 1906. As noted previously, Mary Marsily brought such a McEnerney suit, and by judgment dated February 28, 1908, she was granted title by the court to the total distance of 68-1/2 feet on the easterly border of Powell Street, and extending to the middle of Miles Court on the easterly side of the Club property. Quite properly the title company had pointed out that the opinion was useless to prove title at the present time even though this judgment had been saved from the earthquake and fire, because there could have been other and subsequent conveyances of this property which might be at variance. Accordingly, a new McEnerney suit would be required, as had been indicated earlier by the title company.

As pointed out earlier here, on November 5, 1943, a judgment was obtained in a McEnerney suit brought by the University Club against all persons claiming any interest in the property quieting title to a rectangle 56 feet between Powell Street and the westerly line of Miles Court and the easterly line of Powell Street. This describes only the precise area on which the Club is built. Title to the westerly half of Miles Street abutting this property was apparently not included in this particular McEnerney suit and, therefore, left open the question of reaffirmance of title by a McEnerney suit by the University Club at the present time concerning the adjacent westerly half of Miles Court.

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\* However, copies of all documents referred to herein do exist in support of the statements made herein.



It also appeared of record that George W. Turner brought a McEnerney suit to quiet title to his portion of the lots to the east of the Miles Court, i.e., lots 7-10, which ran to the middle of Miles Court in accordance with the earlier suit. This decree was entered September 21, 1911. In this decree it was specifically held as a finding of fact that the City and County of San Francisco had filed an answer in the case and made no claim to any property described therein, and that it had no right, title, claim, or interest in and to the said real property or any part of it. Other owners of the units of property bordering the east side of Miles Court, similarly filed McEnerney suits quieting title to their separate ownerships of Miles Street and/or Court, all of which were made of record.

Armed with all of this certified material and letters from various title companies, Messrs. Church Peters, Herb Ray, and Henry Hardy met with Mr. Swig August 19, 1969. Churchill Peters and the writer represented the opposition and Herb Ray was the director liaison. All three agreed this was the most incredible meeting which each had ever attended. It was completely staged and orchestrated. Upon arrival at the appropriate time at Mr. Swig's office, each was handed a printed brochure entitled, "Benjamin H. Swig, Committees and Directorships, Civic and Charitable Organizations, Business and Religious Affiliations, Awards and Citations, 1969." The list printed in small type occupied the size of several 3 x 5 cards printed crosswise on the small dimension. A complete and full memorandum of this meeting dated August 21, 1969, was delivered by this special committee to Captain Lewis. The meeting with Mr. Swig was one of the greatest snow jobs the writer ever encountered. Mr. Swig all but stated he had the University Club right where he wanted it and would not let go. It was most unsatisfactory and made us all realize that a McEnerney suit was our only way to clear our title and define our rights in Miles Court and that Swig would use all of his considerable powers and influence to oppose such a suit.

On August 21, 1969, the directors notified all life and regular members that in a meeting with Mr. Swig it had been agreed that (a) no bill to the Club for the refurbishing of 830 Powell Street would be rendered by him until November 1, 1969, (b) in the interim, the attorneys for the Fairmont Hotel Company and the University Club would try to work out a new agreement, (c) that any new agreement which might result would be mailed out to all life and regular members before execution and that the board would be guided by the wishes of the majority of the voting members. This report was hardly satisfactory to the opposition as it did not conform with the facts, the established documents, the by-laws, or the wishes of the membership in any respect. This was apparently decided upon at another secret meeting by the directors but certainly had no reference to the meeting of August 19, 1969.

The shortcomings of this communication from the board was summarized and called to their attention in a letter of August 26, 1969, signed by Church Peters, Tindall Cashion, and Henry Hardy.

It appears that in the interval, Philip E. Diamond, Esq., (of Landels, Ripley, Gregory, and Diamond) was further engaged as attorney to look after the interests of the University Club. The writer having known Phil Diamond for a long time prior to this, tried several times, first to have conferences with him regarding the documents which were of record, and second, to receive a copy of his opinion which he had given to the University Club Board of Directors. After many fruitless calls the writer was told by Phil Diamond that Captain Lewis had advised him that the writer was not to be given a copy of this opinion nor was Phil Diamond to discuss anything concerning its content. Accordingly he, Diamond, was merely abiding by instructions in avoiding any contact. The opinion by Diamond referred to could not be considered confidential as Captain Lewis had shown it to several members as demonstrating he was abiding by the promise to keep after this matter.

Finally, on September 4, 1969, a new draft of an "Agreement of Sale of Real Estate" was delivered so that the opposition could study it. The draft agreement did, in fact, come from Phil Diamond, who understood that he was authorized by the president to deliver a copy to the opposition. However, later Phil Diamond called and stated that he was in error, and that it was the decision of the board whether to release it or not, and he had not been authorized to do so.

In spite of this the opposition reviewed the draft and made various changes which were written into a further draft dated September 9, 1969 and delivered both to the board and Phil Diamond.

A notice to the membership by the board of directors dated September 30, 1969, stated that the directors had decided to withdraw from the agreement of April 2, 1969, and that negotiations were currently taking place to determine the terms of such withdrawal. Philip Diamond was authorized to draft a document expressing this intention and indicating that the Club had already paid to the Fairmont Hotel the sum of \$21,825.60, and had also incurred attorneys' fees of an equal or greater amount.

The opposition expressed itself in a letter to the directors dated October 8, 1969, stating that they approved the withdrawal of the University Club from any negotiations with Mr. Swig. Because other matters had crept in, such as air rights and further impractical considerations, and driven to the point of complete frustration, the opposition independently raised substantial funds from the membership for litigation to rescind and/or void the Swig



Agreement, if the directors could not or would not do so. It was made clear to the board that the money was held on deposit by the opposition and that not one cent of it had been spent in the hope that this situation could be concluded peaceably and without litigation. However, rumors continued to persist. The secret negotiations of the board became more complicated and confusing by the addition of seeming minutiae insisted upon by Swig, and each one of these involved a legal opinion from the attorneys for the Club. In short, the matter was becoming extremely complicated and expensive, and unduly so.

On January 12, 1970, Captain Lewis was advised by letter that months had gone by and still the Swig situation had not been terminated as agreed. An additional \$15,000 had been borrowed by the directors from the bank to keep the Swig matter alive, with interest payments continuing to run, all of which were contrary to the board's earlier decision, and wholly unnecessary. On January 13, 1970, Captain Lewis came to the writer's office for a face-to-face discussion. He was advised the opposition felt that it might have to resort to a suit not only for a rescission of the agreement but to get University Club money back. It was believed that the threat of litigation might spark some action, since it was believed that Mr. Swig would not care to indulge in litigation with respect to an agreement where he would be charged with overreaching and unconscionable conduct in connection with a nonprofit corporation. Captain Lewis blamed the action delays upon the Club's attorneys, which was not the case.

Because of the failure to produce results, on January 28, 1970, it was suggested to Captain Lewis that Church Peters, Bud Barnes, and Leon de Fremery be designated a committee to accomplish the original purpose promised by the directors, and avoid this litigation. Unfortunately, Captain Lewis ignored this suggestion and designated Gregory Stout to call on Mr. Swig, and persisted in having the lawyers get together to prepare a "mutually acceptable" agreement concerning the ownership and management of 830 Powell. Numerous drafts were prepared, even including air rights to be given up by the Club, but none was acceptable to the opposition. In a letter dated February 16, 1970, Mr. Swig was advised that the Club intended to bring a McEnerney suit for purposes of establishing fee title to the land underlying Miles Court, pending settlement drafting.

On February 27, 1970, the board of directors notified the membership that an action to reestablish title in Miles Court through a McEnerney suit was being filed in the Superior Court by the Club's attorneys. Every few days during the month of March, 1970, Mr. Diamond was called to ask whether or not the suit had been filed. Actually, the suit was not filed until the last week in March of 1970.

Inevitably, on April 1, 1970, notice of the Annual Meeting for May 20, 1970 was sent to the membership.

Knowing full well that the matter would again be the subject of the discussion at the Annual Meeting, Captain Lewis addressed a letter to Mr. Swig asking that the principals (but not the opposition) and their attorneys meet for a discussion which would have as its objective the quick termination of this situation before the meeting, but still adhering to the mutual interests of ownership and management of the 830 Powell Street property.

It is uncertain whether or not a private meeting ever took place, but whether it did or not, a draft of an option agreement to purchase 830 Powell Street was presented by the directors and dated May of 1970. This put the Club back to square 1. The opposition accordingly, prepared and paid for a printed document addressed to the members of the University Club and factually summarizing the entire situation with respect to the acquisition of 830 Powell Street. This was mailed at the opposition's expense to each active and life member of the Club and speaks for itself. [See appendix, pages 268-75]

The annual report of the president printed and furnished at the meeting contained a statement that a McEnerney action had been filed, which when determined, will "resolve at last the conflicting rights and interest, in Miles Court". The financial report showed that \$26,431 had been expended on the 830 Powell Street property. No attorneys fees or other costs were separately identified in the accounting of the Club expenditures.

A resolution was presented at the Annual Meeting by the opposition instructing the new directors of the University Club forthwith to (a) proceed in its diligent efforts to finalize the terms of the proposed agreement now in negotiation, i.e., the draft presented by the board [which the opposition was confident would never be accepted by Swig], (b) appoint a special committee from the membership qualified in the field of real estate to advise the board with respect to the practicability and feasibility of the proposed agreement, (c) upon the tentative acceptance by the parties (the directors and Swig) of such a proposed agreement and before any financial or other commitments were made on behalf of the University Club, to submit the agreement to the membership entitled to vote for approval in accordance with Article IX, Section 8 of the by-laws, (d) provide for the submission of any contrary views to the membership in an appropriate document with the same mailing as the directors' submission, the expense of which would be paid by the Club, (e) provide for and advise the voting membership that the voting was to be only by written secret mail ballot on a date certain not more than 30 days from the date of mailing nor less than 20 days therefrom, (f) the voter ballots to be sent to and counted by a



qualified and disinterested third party, and (g) that the Club should be bound by the approval vote of not less than two-thirds of the regular resident and life members in accordance with Article IX, Section 8 of the by-laws; and it was further resolved that the directors were instructed by the membership in the event a prompt acceptance of the parties is not reached with respect to the agreement under negotiation, they should take immediate steps to rescind the agreement of April 2, 1969, and recover the full amount of the money mistakenly paid under this agreement. This resolution was overwhelmingly passed.

Gregory Stout, the new president [March 1970], was again designated by the directors to make the contact with Mr. Swig and report to him the action of the membership. However, by June 23, 1970, nothing had been done. Philip Diamond was reminded not only of the resolution, as he was present at the Annual Meeting when it was passed, but that the membership assumed, the McEnerney suit was under control and working its way along. Gregory Stout was given the rescission notice to serve on Mr. Swig, but this was not done and never has been done. He was reminded of this neglect on July 16, 1970.

The opposition again notified Gregory Stout that he had not taken any steps to serve the rescission or to recover the money which the Club had paid to Swig, but he merely indifferently responded that the matter was proceeding apace.

A progress report regarding 830 Powell Street was sent to the membership by President Gregory Stout September 9, 1970, stating that the McEnerney action had been filed by Mr. Diamond's firm and that a rescission had been executed on behalf of the Club and would be served on Mr. Swig. (No rescission was ever served.)

In a letter dated October 19, 1970, Frank Baumgarten at the request of the opposition reported on an examination of the docket of the McEnerney case No. 44065 in Superior Court Clerk's Office. It showed clearly that Diamond's office failed to take advantage of the provisions which would have terminated this case promptly and that the case was about to be dismissed. Fortunately the situation was corrected just in time, after it was called to Diamond's attention by the opposition.

The new real estate advisory committee headed by Chairman John Clow reported September 25, 1970, agreeing completely with the points of the opposition and stating that there was no excuse now for further delays or wasting time on deals relating to the purchase of 830 Powell Street, with Mr. Swig, or anyone else.

The board of directors was advised on October 21, 1970, in a long and detailed report pointing out that the resolution, overwhelmingly passed at the Annual Meeting in May of 1970, had

not been followed, that the events showed in spite of the efforts of the new directors to carry out their duties, there was a total disregard by President Stout of the policy established by the board and that this neglect of duty was against the best interests of the Club. Also, the inexplicable position of Diamond's firm with regard to the McEnerney suit was again called to their attention. It was not until November 11, 1970, that some good news arrived. Judgment in the McEnerney suit had apparently been entered terminating the situation with full vindication of the University Club and the opposition, and that ownership of the alley known as Miles Court was established in fee simple in the University Club. It was again urged upon the directors to advise Mr. Swig that the money should immediately be returned to the University Club. In spite of everything, there were some public use details to be settled in the McEnerney suit. Judgment in the McEnerney suit was not finally filed in Case No. 44065 until April 15, 1971.

The new president elected in May of 1971, Fred O. Johnson, tried diligently to get Mr. Swig to keep to his promises to rescind the agreement and return the money to the Club, which as the report showed, was over \$24,000. In addition the Club had expended more than \$6,000 in attorneys' fees, and this was conceded as gone. The active, diligent, and intelligent handling of the Swig matter by the new board of directors could get nowhere with respect to any agreement with Swig. Finally, it was determined that in the best interests of the Club, the whole matter should be concluded on the best deal we could get from Swig, and therefore it was settled on the basis (1) that the agreement entered in April of 1969, with respect to 830 Powell Street was declared terminated as having no force or effect, (2) that the Fairmont Hotel Company and the Club mutually agreed to release each other from any and all obligations arising under the agreement of April 1969, and mutually waived any claims, rights, or causes of action which either party might have against the other arising out of said agreement, including the joint venture it contemplated, (3) that all sums heretofore paid by the Club to the Fairmont should be retained by the Fairmont and the Club should not be obligated to and is released from any obligation heretofore existing to pay any additional sums to the Fairmont, and (4) the agreement was binding upon and inured to the benefit of the successors and assigns of each of the parties.

In other words, after more than two years, this unhappy event was concluded without any further liability but with no recovery of any of the \$50,000-plus spent, but with full rights in fee simple to the property of Miles Court in the University Club. All of this had been accomplished without any newspaper or other publicity, showing that the University Club was a gentleman's Club after all.



Later it was believed, on authority which was regarded as reliable, that the Swig efforts were all a part of a contrived scheme to secure the University Club property. It had been well-known at the time (1967-1968) that Swig wanted to build a Twin Tower to match the one at Powell and Sacramento, at the corner of Powell and California. It was also known in real estate circles that he had applied for the money in New York and that after study, the money was refused because the University Club could also build a tower at Powell and California which would interfere with the effectiveness and value of the proposed Swig Twin Tower. Swig's plan, it was believed, was to involve the University Club, if he could, in a deal which it could not finance and would have to default. He would then be in a position to manipulate and take advantage of the default so as to force the sale of the University Club property which he would then be able to acquire. He was aware that the Club was then in a shaky financial condition, that one of the University Club officers was said to be seeking his endorsement as a judge, and as an applicant would look favorably on any of Swig's suggestions, and that events looked to be favorable to Swig for the try. While this seems to be in the realm of Machiavellian fancy, a careful study of the proposed terms of the several agreements both signed and unsigned, the writer believes shows a carefully worked out plan which is entirely consistent with this purpose and result. The record shows once Swig got a toe hold, even an illegal one, he never let go and even made the University Club pay all his expenses and costs, even his attorneys' fees, as conditions for signing the release, while he kept title to the property of 830 Powell Street.

It was a very narrow escape. Very.

The epilogue is a happy one. The then directors considered for several months what would be a suitable recognition for literally saving the University Club, all unknown to the writer until much later. Happily he was granted an Honorary Life Membership in his beloved University Club. Nothing could have been more fitting or more appreciated.

[Interview resumes]

Teiser: You must have done a lot of legal work for the club over the years.

Hardy: Some, and at different times. When we had this difficulty with Mr. Swig, I represented the club members, not the club, as I was on the opposite side. I knew that it would take more money than I could afford, even if I just gave my time. I still needed money, because I was faced with possible severe litigation. Also, the

digging around through the old papers and the histories took time. They were old and one couldn't look through the club records because there were none. We had to go back to some original deeds that had been held by the people. I went to some of the members of the club and said, "Look, here's the situation. I need about \$10,000." I had no trouble raising \$10,000 just around the table at lunch. Some of the very substantial members came up to me afterwards and said, "You go ahead and do whatever is necessary and we'll see that you get whatever you need." So I always had a cushion to fall back on, which was a great comfort. Actually, I don't think I spent more than \$5,000 or \$6,000 in cash. The great achievement was keeping this difficulty out of the media. Bear in mind that in most instances the only information given the club members by the opposition was the eight-page statement I wrote.

#### Loyalty of Club Members

- Teiser: We were wondering why people do stay loyal to the University Club, when all of you that we have spoken to have mentioned that there are certain advantages to other clubs.
- Hardy: The good fellowship and enjoyment of each other--the basis on which the club was founded--has been maintained for nearly one hundred years.
- Teiser: Mr. Sherman indicated that he liked the University Club because it was a quiet club, because there wasn't much going on.
- Hardy: That's really true. It's a quiet club and it doesn't make any demands on its members except that they try to urge the using of the club facilities more.

#### Major Changes in Club Membership

[Mr. Hardy was asked to add, in writing, his comments on the major changes that have affected club membership over the years.]

- Hardy: It is my belief that the change in membership since World War II, and about which the directors of the University Club have struggled to accomodate, was due to several causes. There was an influx of servicemen and women who came from all parts of this country and elected to stay in the Bay Area; the Bay and Golden Gate Bridges made access to the suburban areas easier; air travel became less costly; and internally at the club the older members were retiring and their inevitable deaths took its toll. These, each in their own way, depleted the membership. The vacancies



Hardy: were replaced by younger men who were, in numbers, wholly unfamiliar with the gentility of San Francisco--meaning no disrespect--this particular area, and especially the history of the University Club. Thus, they had no comparable background for their new residences and for the quiet refinement of the sociability of their peers. The past appeared to mean nothing, except for the quality of the University Club which the earlier members had built up and which they inherited from their predecessors. The contacts which had given rise to the sociability of college men and which had been maintained were less frequent and therefore there was less opportunity. The raison d'etre diminished.

Perhaps the following partial listing of members from the 1890s to 1940s gives support to the views above. This list does not pretend to be complete, as there were many others, all of whom contributed so much to San Francisco and the University Club, and for fifty years gave us this legacy.

This list, provided by F. Barreda Sherman, gives some suggestion as a supplement to that provided earlier by Nathaniel Blaisdell [University Club Roster 1890-1954, pp. 21-22]:

Alden Chickering--early partner, Chickering & Gregory; Charles P. Eells--early partner, Goodfellow, Eells; Felix T. Smith--partner, Pillsbury, Madison & Sutro; M. M. O'Shaughnessy--builder of Hetch Hetchy Dam; James K. Moffitt--President, First National Bank; Elliott McAllister and Elliott Jr.--Presidents, Bank of California; W. B. Bourn--President, Spring Valley Water Co.; W. H. Crocker and W. W. Crocker--Presidents, Crocker Bank; A. J. Dibblee--investment banker; J. W. Paramore--Episcopal Bishop; Roger Kent--U. S. Senator, Democratic Party Chairman; J. Pearce Mitchell--Stanford professor; Peter Folger--coffee; Edward Eyre--grain dealer; Edward G. Schmiedell--partner, Mailliard & Schmiedell, food brokers; Austin D. Moore--lumberman, builder of railroads; Bruce Dohrmann--Nathan Dohrmann & Co.; Alexander Baldwin; E. J. Molera--gave San Francisco the Cervantes Memorial Statue; Kaspar Fischell--leading eye specialist; Hans Barkan--leading eye specialist; E. P. Merniche--leading doctor, musician, author; Churchill Peters--investments; Harry M. Sherman (Barreda's father)--reported to be the first orthopedic surgeon on the Pacific Coast, professor of surgery at U. C. Medical School; David Starr Jordan; Warren Olney--justice; Mark Noble--representative of Baldwin Locomotive & Pullman Co.; Phelps Hunter; F. Barreda Sherman--investments, author, historian; Leon de Fremery--attorney and CPA.

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F. Barreda Sherman

The University Club of San Francisco:  
One Hundred Years of Tradition and Change

An Interview Conducted by  
Ruth Teiser  
in 1986



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## F. BARREDA SHERMAN

Born in San Francisco in 1892, F. Barreda Sherman graduated from Yale in 1915 and undertook a career as an investment counselor. The son of a University Club member, he joined the club in 1920, continuing his membership to the present save for a three-year period in the 1940s. At the time of the interview he was the oldest living member.



BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name Frederick Barreda Sherman  
Date of birth Dec. 22, 1892 Birthplace San Francisco  
Father's full name Harry Mitchell Sherman  
Occupation Orthopedic Surgeon Birthplace Providence, R.I.  
Mother's full name Matilde Amelia Barreda  
Occupation Housewife Birthplace New York, N.Y.  
Your spouse Lorraine Emerson Ripley (married Apr. 9, 1923, Paris)  
Your children Charlotte Elizabeth Ripley (Mrs. Room T. Sier)  
Judy Mauran (Mrs. Robert S. Taylor), Frederick Barreda Sherman, Jr.  
Where did you grow up? San Francisco  
Present community Mills Valley, Calif. since 1926  
Education Grant Primary School, Pacific Ave., S.F., Thacher School, Agate, Cal.  
Yale University, New Haven, Ct. A.B. 1915  
Occupation(s) Investment Counselor (Laffer, Doherty & Sherman, S.F.)  
Areas of expertise Personal finance, family history, international relations  
Other interests or activities Since retirement in 1958 I have written and published privately two family histories - "A New England Heritage" (Sherman) 1969, and "From the Guadalupe River to the Golden Gate" (Barreda) 1977. Both were Benefactors.  
Organizations in which you are active University Club, S.F., Commonwealth Club, Yacht Club of San Francisco, League of Nations League, American Association for the United Nations. Member Board of Trustees, Thacher School, Agate, 1923-1937.  
F. B. Sherman  
Feb. 15, 1985





I F. BARREDA SHERMAN

[Date of Interview: November 21, 1986]##

Education

Teiser: Were you born in San Francisco?

Sherman: I was born in San Francisco.

Teiser: Then you went to Yale?

Sherman: Then I went to Yale. I went to Thacher School, then I went to Yale. Did you ever hear of the Thacher School?

Teiser: Yes.

Sherman: I am the oldest living graduate of the Thacher School, and the oldest living member of the University Club.

Teiser: Both of those organizations must be proud of you.

Sherman: Well, I don't know about that!

Teiser: A lot of boys went to Yale at that time, didn't they, from San Francisco--more than now?

Sherman: Not very many. Well, Bill Crocker, he was in my class, he was from San Francisco, naturally. I guess he and I were the only ones that I can remember now. William W. Crocker, William H.'s son.

##tape interruption

Teiser: What Yale class were you in?

Sherman: 1915.

Teiser: Did you come right back to San Francisco?

Sherman: Yes.

### Professional Experience

Teiser: In San Francisco, what did you do?

Sherman: I got a job as a mail clerk with E.H. Rollins and Sons, a national investment bond house.

Teiser: And then you remained in that field--

Sherman: For sixteen years, until the Depression, when the firm went broke, practically, and I left it and went into business for myself.

Teiser: You were an investment counselor?

Sherman: Eventually I joined a firm which became formal investment counselors. I was with them from 1936 until I retired in 1958. Leppo, Dorking and Sherman.

Teiser: Did you specialize in some aspect of investments?

Sherman: Well, just general investment counsel, deciding what securities people should hold, whether they should hold or sell or what, and submitting periodic reports to them, information about the outlook and so on, just like any other investment counselor.

Teiser: Very valuable service.

Sherman: We hope so.

### Childhood Recollections of the University and Bohemian Clubs

Teiser: Then you told me, I think, on the phone, that your first view of the University Club had been at the old club, when you went there with your father[Harry M. Sherman].

Sherman: Yes.

Teiser: Can you describe that?

Sherman: Yes. My father and I, in 1898 or '99--I'm not quite sure which--went to Arnold Genthe to have our photographs taken. Or, he had his photograph taken, and Arnold took mine too. His studio was right close to the then clubhouse of the University Club, down on Sutter Street near Mason.

Teiser: You pronounce that in the old fashioned way.

Sherman: What?

Teiser: S-u-t-t-e-r.

Sherman: Well, I'm an old-fashioned fellow. My grandfather came here in 1846.

Teiser: Who was he?

Sherman: Richard Mitchell Sherman. He came here with William Heath Davis. He was William Heath Davis' clerk, and Davis was supercargo of the ship Euphemia, which now lies buried beneath the Transamerica Building, I believe.

Teiser: Yes, I see. You have a good right to pronounce it "sooter." [laughter]. I interrupted you. You had just had your photographs taken by Arnold Genthe?

Sherman: Yes, yes. And at that time, we had lunch at the University Club before going to Genthe's studio. I have told about that in my talk to the club\*, and there are also pictures of the club at that time in the 1954 by-laws book.

Teiser: Can you just describe it in words?

Sherman: Oh, I was quite impressed by it, particularly by the man who went around with a baron of beef in a rolling cart, which he carried around and each guest said what piece he wanted. The waiter had on a tall white cap and a white apron, and he had a carving knife attached to chains which were attached to a belt around his waist. He would sharpen the knife on the steel, and then he would get you a piece of beef. That was something that we didn't have at home, so that impressed me.

The sommelier--the man who poured the wine--had a leather apron, and he had the keys to the wine cellar hung around his neck, I believe, so that was quite impressive too. But I can't remember what we ate. There is, however, a menu of the club at that time, in the by-laws that I've mentioned.

---

\*"Our Club Heritage," May 8, 1981. See appendix, pp. 286-300



Teiser: How old were you at that time?

Sherman: I was seven.

Teiser: Can you remember what the room looked like?

Sherman: Yes. It was dark green, and there again, the thing to do is to look in the book at the picture.

Teiser: Your words will tell more about it.

Sherman: It was dark, and had the worst type of furniture at that time, I would say, but that didn't make much of an impression. The thing that made an impression on me on that occasion was that before we went to the University Club, my father took me down to lower Post Street, near the corner of Kearny where the Bohemian Club, of which he was also a member, had its clubhouse, up on the second floor. You went up in an elevator, and you came out of the elevator right across from a window which looked out in the street, and hanging in the window was a big cage, and in the cage was an owl. I was very much impressed by that, naturally, and I think probably I'm the only person alive today that ever saw the owl. You know, the owl is the symbol of the Bohemian Club. "Weaving Spiders Come Not Here," I think that's their motto, and of course an owl would catch a spider very readily.

Teiser: That's a delightful story. You were most impressed with another club.

Sherman: Oh, sure. We had lunch there, and so forth.

I attended, with the [University of California] faculty, the first commencement that was held in the Greek Theatre.

Teiser: Oh, did you! For heaven's sake!

Sherman: Which shows how informal things were in those days. My father was Professor of Surgery in the faculty, so he had the right to walk in the procession, all dressed in his robe and so forth, and he took me along. Nobody said anything about it. I went up there and walked down with him, and sat on the stage, and it was just accepted. [laughs] Nobody thought anything about it. Isn't that a crazy thing!?

Teiser: How old were you then?

Sherman: Well, look that up and find out when the first commencement in the Greek Theatre was. It was in the early 1900s.

Teiser: You were still young.

Sherman: Yes. I also attended the first performance, Antigone with Margaret Angland, in the Greek Theatre. Can't remember what it was about! [laughter] I should know the story of Antigone, but I forget things.

Teiser: Your father must have enjoyed your company.

Sherman: Well, sometimes he did.

## II THE UNIVERSITY CLUB

Joining the Club

- Teiser: When it came time for you to join a club, I believe you said your father took you to the University Club and suggested you join that?
- Sherman: Yes. He took me there to lunch in March 1920, or maybe even a little bit earlier because I became a member in March 1920. I can remember where we sat in the corner of the dining room, looking out over California Street and the bay, and he said he thought it would be a good idea for me to join the club. I thought it would too, so I did.
- Teiser: Did he not suggest that you join the Bohemian Club?
- Sherman: No, he never suggested that. I never joined the Bohemian Club.
- Teiser: How did he happen to choose the University Club over the Bohemian?
- Sherman: Well, I think probably because it was less expensive, and quieter, and easier to become accustomed to. The Bohemian Club was much more active, you know, with its high jinks and all that sort of business. Maybe he thought it would be easier for me to get into the University Club, I don't know. [laughs] He never mentioned it to me, and I never really wanted to join the Bohemian Club.
- Teiser: What sort of a club was the University Club then, in 1920?
- Sherman: Well, it was a quiet, gracious, friendly atmosphere and you know the building--it's the same building as now.

Requirements for Membership

- Sherman: You asked the other day what we looked for in members. Well, we looked for educated gentlemen. Somebody who would have a background somewhat similar to the rest of us, who could get along well with us, and who was likeable. That was the only requirement that he be a gentleman, and was educated and nice.
- Teiser: So far as being a gentleman and nice, those are not quite definable qualities. How did you find out what a person was?
- Sherman: Oh, the way he acted, the way he talked, and I suppose the way he dressed, too. You wouldn't want him coming to lunch in dungarees. The requirements were not very difficult for a nice college man to meet.
- Teiser: Did he have to be known by some members who would vouch for him?
- Sherman: Oh, yes. He had to be known and sponsored, and interviewed by the Admissions Committee, of which I was a member at one time.
- Teiser: How large was the Admissions Committee?
- Sherman: I think we had six or seven members.
- Teiser: All of you would interview him at once?
- Sherman: I believe so, yes, as I remember, and I don't remember it too well. I can show you in the book here, when I was in it, who were members with me, but that's not important.
- We had meetings at lunch at the club where a prospective member would come in, and we'd talk to him, and then vote on him. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred, he was admitted.
- Teiser: Would you invite him to lunch?
- Sherman: I don't think so; I think he came in after we had lunch. One of his sponsors would bring him and introduce him. This is as I remember it. It may not be accurate, but I know that we did meet him.
- Teiser: Yes. Was there a high initiation fee then?
- Sherman: I can't remember what it was, but it would be very low by today's rates, probably. I don't know what it is today.



Teiser: I wondered if it was low enough by comparison to earning power, to allow young men just starting a career to join?

Sherman: I think, yes, that the recent college graduates got in at a lower rate, or else they were given the right to pay in installments. I think perhaps that's one of the reasons that my father thought of the University Club rather than the Bohemian Club, because I don't know that they had any such privilege.

The University Club was anxious to get college men--that's what it's about. And so they wanted to make it easy for a young college man to join.

### Club Activities

Teiser: What was the prevailing interest? Did people like to just sit and talk, or did they like to play cards, or--

Sherman: Well, there was a billiards room, with a billiard table, which is no longer in existence. There was a card room where they played dominoes, bridge and other games, and that is very active still. They have domino tournaments and so forth. We'd have formal dinners once in awhile. But mostly as I remember it was just comradeship--having lunch with a good friend, or a group of friends, and having dinner with a group of friends. That was the chief attraction, certainly from my standpoint: the friends that I made there and took there. Of course we could take guests. We did that quite frequently.

Later on, in 1929 I think it is, they built the first squash court. That was the first what you might call extra-curricular activity that I ever remember at the University Club. I played squash there a few times with a tennis racket, because I didn't have a squash racket. [laughter] But that's become very active now, and they have tournaments and visiting players and so forth.

Teiser: You didn't have any other kind of gym or anything?

Sherman: I think that there was a steam room--I don't remember, to tell you the truth. I never used it. One of my disadvantages, you might say, from a club life standpoint, was that I lived in Mill Valley starting in 1923, so I wasn't over there very much in the evening. I just had to take a ferry boat and get home. A number of the fellows would go up and have cocktails before going home to dinner, or play squash, or sit in the steam room if there was one.

Teiser: Did you stay there overnight occasionally, if you had to be in the city?

Sherman: Yes, but I didn't have to very often. You could spend the night there, and every once in awhile I'd stay in town and have dinner with somebody. Later, when ladies were admitted to the dining room, my wife and I had great pleasure in going to the club for dinner, before going to a movie or the theatre or whatever.

#### Admission of Women as Guests

Teiser: When were woman admitted to the dining room, about, do you remember?

Sherman: Well, that's in the record. I think it was 1942.

Teiser: Was it under protest?

Sherman: I suppose that some men objected, yes. There was some protest, but it wasn't very strong, and we soon found that there were many more people coming to the dining room in the evening. It built up the use of the facility a great deal. It was a lovely place to go; it was quiet, a beautiful view out over the city and the bay; good food and good drink, and nobody there but nice people who wouldn't shout or yell; there was no music. So that was just right for us.

#### Prohibition Days

Teiser: Let me go back to 1920. That was the beginning of Prohibition.

Sherman: I can't remember just when Prohibition began but I guess it was.

Teiser: 1919, it started.

Sherman: Then they had lockers for individual members in the club. So they were taken away and they were taken back. That's all in history, in the book. I can't remember the dates.

Teiser: It tells a little about it, but let me ask you a little more about what wasn't clear to me. You had a locker, and you could keep your liquor in it--

Sherman: Yes.

Teiser: Could you serve it just in your room, then? Or could you take it to the dining room?

Sherman: I think that the regulations changed from time to time, but for a while you could have it only in your room.

Teiser: So, if you didn't have a room, you couldn't serve--

Sherman: Well, some members lived in the club. You could probably rent a guest room for the evening. I didn't do it, so I don't know. I didn't have a locker, I drank just quietly at home.

Teiser: Must have been a strange period.

Sherman: It was a strange period. Thank God it's over.

#### Club Entertainment

Teiser: Some time during that period, there was theatrical entertainment.

Sherman: Oh, yes. From time to time we had first what they called minstrel shows, and then we had what's known as the Shambles. I didn't take part in any of them, I wasn't clever enough, or vocal enough, I guess. But they were a lot of fun.

Teiser: Who went to them?

Sherman: Just the members of the club, and I think you could take lady guests to those.

Teiser: Some of the songs that I saw would have, I think, embarrassed lady guests.

Sherman: [laughs] I haven't got a copy of that songbook--there was a songbook made by Loyall McLaren and Jim Paramore. But that was way back in the early days.

Teiser: I remember his speaking a little of the University Club.

Sherman: I knew him quite well. My grandmother and his parents were neighbors out on Buchanan and Sacramento streets. I played a lot with Dick--Dick McLaren joined the club very soon after I did, and they both went to the Pacific Union Club.

Teiser: Did people sometimes leave that way--?

Sherman: Yes. The Pacific Union Club has more prestige, and has got more tycoons in it. It's of course very attractive, a beautiful building and everything. I think probably to belong to the P.U. club is the top social thing. Then comes the Bohemian Club. They've got two classes of members in the Bohemian Club, you know. They have artistic members, I guess--anybody who can sing or dance or play a guitar or act can get a, I think they call it an artistic membership, but I don't know just what its title is. That's at a lower rate. But that gives them a lot of people to put on the Jinks and so forth. Our dentist was a [vocalist] member of the Bohemian Club, but he never sang for us.

Teiser: The people in the University Club who participated in the shows were not there because--

Sherman: No, they were not professionals at all. And they did it just for fun. Most of them I think had taken part in such a thing in college. Loyall was a very, very clever man from all standpoints, and he wrote some of the songs and so forth.

#### Special Club Memberships

Teiser: There were some special categories of members, though, at the University Club, I think.

Sherman: Well, the life members. You could pay a thousand dollars, I think it was, and not have to pay any dues. There were honorary members. I am one now, but that's no great distinction. I think that anybody who's been a member of the club for more than forty years was made an honorary member.

Teiser: There is some distinction.

Sherman: Yes. I joined in 1920, and I had suffered a great deal financially in the Depression, and I had not entirely recovered from the situation by World War II. It was



Sherman: difficult for me then, and my business was not helped by the war, so I resigned. From 1942 to 1945, I was not a member. Then they gave men that resigned during the war an opportunity to join again, and the situation was better for me then, and I rejoined in 1945. I think that I have been a member of the club for more years than anybody else, with the possible exception of Church [Churchill C.] Peters, who joined in 1923 but maintained his membership inviolate.

Teiser: During the war, though, membership fell very low, didn't it?

Sherman: It fell very low in World War I, and I don't know what the figures were in World War II. But that had its effect, of course.

#### Changes in Club Activity Levels

Teiser: As you look back, how did the club change over the years?

Sherman: Well, it didn't change very much up to the time that I retired in 1958. But since then, there has been a great change. It's much more active now. They have more visiting speakers, they have more music, they have more everything. You read what's been going on there, and I think that probably the management, the board of directors, found out that something had to be done to make the club more attractive to more people. So they've gone at it, and done a very fine job. The membership has risen greatly, and many people are having a lot of fun with their performances and so forth.

Teiser: Would you have preferred it to be that active when you were young?

Sherman: I don't know; because I haven't been around. I liked the quiet evenings there. But I think I would have been glad to have such a thing. They've got some lovely concerts from time to time. I have been there for performances since they became more active. The Yale Whiffenpoofs sang, and my son-in-law took me to that. That was a luncheon performance.

I think that the great value of the club to me was the opportunity it gave for increasing and enjoying my friendship with other men, usually only a few or maybe one at a time. Lunching together or dining together, or drinking together. The comradeship was what it meant to me; the values it had for me.

Luncheon Tables

Teiser: I read that there were some groups that dined together frequently. Did you have such a group?

Sherman: No; because I didn't dine over there very frequently, but we had a luncheon group. There was a table where we all had lunch together every Monday.

Jack Boden and John [A.] Ducournau and Vilas Beckwith, and--gracious, I can't remember them all.

Teiser: About how many of them were there? I suppose it changed from time to time.

Sherman: Oh, about ten, I guess. Some came, some didn't. But you always knew that when you went there you'd find some of your friends at the same table.

Teiser: There was a book published in 1934, a book of round sonnets to members of the table group.\*

Sherman: Oh, yes, that's the table in the corner. Yes, I should have mentioned that. I did not belong to that; that was somewhat younger men. I think they were better organized than we were in our corner of the room. They were at a round table under the head of an eland which had been shot by Mr. Livermore in the pampas of Africa. Things were going from bad to worse physically in the club, and not too much attention was paid to keeping things in order, and one day I think--

###

Teiser: You said, just as they were dining, they were lunching--

Sherman: Yes. They were at lunch. John Renshaw was right under the head of the eland, and the eye fell out of the eland and landed in his soup, to his great surprise. [laughter] At least that's the story. Don't believe everything you hear about the University Club.

Unfortunately, you see, since I retired, I have been to the club very little. Recently, because of my legs, it's been almost impossible for me to go. I don't think I've been

---

\*Thomas Hamilton Breeze, Round Table Sonnets,  
San Francisco: University Club, 1934

Sherman: to the club more than once since 1981, when I gave that talk at lunch. Also, the friends with whom I used to gather have either died or moved away. Most of them, unhappily, have died. I was looking forward in my retirement to going over and having lunch frequently with old friends. And then the best friend I had, John Ducournau, decided to go to Spain to paint. He went to Spain, he got the flu, and he never came back, and I never saw him again. That was a great loss to me.

Teiser: I remember that Mr. Loyall McLaren said that his club life was an important business asset to him.\*

Sherman: Yes. I have no doubt of it.

Teiser: Was it to others?

Sherman: Oh, yes. I think it is to all. It wasn't particularly to me, but--and particularly the Pacific Union Club, because there are more important businessmen there than there are at the University Club, but I have no doubt that it's been helpful to men at the University Club. I was never particularly business-oriented. I didn't think of somebody, "Oh, gee he's with Pacific Gas." I thought more what kind of a fellow he was, did I like him, did we have similar interests, could I have lunch with him and just talk?

For example, John Ducournau was in charge of the investment account of the Wells Fargo Bank. At least, I believe that was his job; it was very close to that. I was in the investment counsel business. But we never discussed securities at all--what to buy, what to sell, what was going on in the market. We always talked about other things that had to do with life outside business. I think I was rather unusual in that regard; probably there was much more business discussion among members than I ever engaged in.

Teiser: Were there politics?

Sherman: Oh, yes. We'd talk about politics.

Teiser: But did people who were important in politics come there?

Sherman: I don't remember. Do you mean officials like the governor and the secretary of state and--

Teiser: Yes; did anybody who had political power come and arrange political deals and things like that?

Sherman: No, not that I know of.

---

\*Norman Loyall McLaren, Jr., Business and Club Life in San Francisco, an oral history interview conducted 1977, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1978.

Teiser: Well, I will leave for today, because I don't want to tire you--

Sherman: Well, look, I've got some things I want to say to you!

Teiser: All right. Please do.

### Ivy League Heritage

Sherman: [looking through papers] In the early years, Harvard and Yale, particularly Harvard and the other Ivy League colleges, were very important to the club. Many of the graduates would come west shortly after graduating, and they'd look around to find a place to go to make friends in San Francisco. So that was an important factor in our growth in the early years.

Teiser: What were the founding universities of the club?

Sherman: Harvard, Yale, University of California, Amherst, Columbia, Brown, Hamilton, University of Virginia, Williams, and the Military and Naval Academies; they were well represented among the original members.

Teiser: Did you include Stanford?

Sherman: Stanford was not founded until 1895, so we're older than Stanford.

Teiser: Were there many Stanford people in it, though, when you were first a member?

Sherman: Oh, yes. My cousin, who was an active member of the club, was [J.] Pearce Mitchell. He was registrar of Stanford for many years.

### Hermes Statue

Sherman: Now anything that you write---by the way, are you the poor girl who has to write this all up?

Teiser: No, I'm not. Somebody's going to work from this.

Sherman: I see. At any rate, be sure to give due notice to Hermes. Hermes is a statue, and it's now in the little sort of park just below the club on California Street. Maybe you've seen it



Sherman: there. Well, take a look at it! [laughs] Right behind the club is Miles Court, and right beyond that is the squash court, and next to the squash court is a little open space that's sort of park-like. It's got a strong open-work fence around it, and in it is a statue of Hermes.

That was brought to this country I think for the 1915 [Panama Pacific International] Exposition, and then purchased and given to the club. It was in the club for some time, but it was very heavy and they decided that it would break through the floor. So they put it in the basement, then it was finally brought up to the front entrance, and then they thought that wasn't a good place for it. So they put it outside, and then it was stolen. Henry Hardy was the man who got it back, and that's quite a story, so that should be given due attention.

#### Club Managers

Sherman: Now, we've got names of all the officers in all these books that you've seen, but we've never mentioned any names of the managers. The manager is a very important individual, naturally. I don't know whether, in the history of the club, anybody can dig out the name of the manager, and get any opinion as to whether or not it would be wise to put it in the history of the club. But I can remember a very bad one and I can remember a very good one.

Teiser: Can you say their names?

Sherman: Well, the very bad one was named Bailey, and the very good one was named Schaeffer.

By the way, have you been down to the basement? You've been in the club, though, haven't you? Oh, yes. Down in the basement, there is an entrance on Miles Court, and also you can go down the steps to it. Schaeffer made three very attractive rooms down there for private parties and dinners and so forth, and built up some business there. That was a very good idea. He also was very important in helping to improve the appearance of the club.

Teiser: Is Miles Court named after someone in the club?

Sherman: I have no idea. Maybe General Miles. Wasn't he an important fellow in the Spanish-American War?

Teiser: I don't know. I don't recognize his name.

Sherman: Look him up in The Bancroft Library.\*

### Club Old-Timers

Sherman: I have spoken to you of Churchill Peters. Have you talked to him yet?

Teiser: No. I am hoping to.

Sherman: I see. Well, he has been very very much more active than I in the club, and he's been president of the club. He's devoted to the club. He's a fine and interesting man, and you could get more out of him than you could out of me in a month. And Henry Hardy--you talked to him--

Teiser: Once, and we'll be going back.

Sherman: Yes. He's full of information. And Chauncy McKeever--have you had any contact with him?

Teiser: Not yet.

Sherman: But you know about him. Those three came to my mind as being the ones that can really fill you in on the early days.

Peters joined, as I said, in 1923. Hardy was later. I can't remember when McKeever joined.

### Prominent Club Members

Sherman: You asked if there had been any important men in the community who had been members of the club. Are you interested in that?

Teisher: Yes.

Sherman: The first was Mr. William B. Bourn, who was president in 1903-04. That's quite a ways ago. Did you ever hear of the Spring Valley Water Company?

---

\*Possibly General Nelson A. Miles [1839-1925]

Teiser: Yes. Filoli?

Sherman: Yes. He was the president of Spring Valley Water Company, and he owned Filoli, and he owned Empire Mine up in Grass Valley, if you've ever heard of that.

Teiser: Yes.

Sherman: That's got a beautiful building there, too. Filoli and the Grass Valley building, both built by Willis Polk. Also a house in San Francisco built by Willis Polk. But Bourn was a very important individual in San Francisco history, the history of the state, I guess.

Then Charles P. Eells; he was one of the original partners of Goodfellow, Eells, Moore, and Orrick. That's one of the outstanding San Francisco law firms. That still exists today, as Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe. So I suppose he could be regarded as important in the old days. He was the president of the club in 1897. Early in the 1900s, the presidents were Thomas Magee, Alexander [R.] Baldwin, and Edward [F.] Haas.

I know Ed Haas was important, but I don't know just what he was important for. Magee and Baldwin, they were both in real estate very heavily, if I mistake not.

And then Elliott McAllister, [Jr.] much later, in 1940 he was president of the club. He was president of the Bank of California.

James K. Moffitt was president of lots of things. But he was president of the First National Bank in the old days. I don't believe he was president of the club, but he was one of the important members.

#### Clay Miller Poem

Sherman: I'm a sentimental fellow, and I ended my talk at the University Club with a poem. There was a member of the club named Clay Miller, who has since died, who everybody loved, and on his ninetieth birthday we gave him a birthday party, a birthday luncheon.

Teiser: 1969. [looking at photograph]

Sherman: 1969. He was ninety years old then. You can see me down in the lower left-hand corner, as I looked in 1969. And of course, at the end of his party, he recited a little poem that made quite an impression on me. I asked him to write it out and send me a copy, and he was rather surprised, but he agreed to do so.

Count your garden by the flowers,  
 Never by the leaves that fall.  
 Count your day by golden hours,  
 Never mind the clouds at all.  
 Count your nights by stars, not shadows;  
 Count your life by faith, not fears.  
 And then, with joy on every birthday,  
 Count your age by friends, not years.

Now, I put that at the end of my talk, and I hope that when the book is written, it will go in somewhere.

Teiser: I hope so, too.

Sherman: I think it's a very nice little thing, and very appropriate in connection with the club. "Count your age by friends, not years." He said to me, "Barreda, you asked for this by me. Not very good poetry, but a good idea. Best wishes."

Now, that is in the transcript of my talk.

You asked for little things that I remembered, and I don't remember too much. I remember before I went to give this talk, I was asked to mention vignettes. And I didn't exactly know just what a vignette is. A vignette is the definition of--a depiction in words, especially one of a dainty kind. [laughter] Well, my comments to the ladies of flexible virtue in my talk is hardly dainty, I suppose.

Teiser: That adds a lot to what we have, I think. No matter how much you've written about it, and spoken about it, why, there are little things that come out in conversation that I think are important to have.

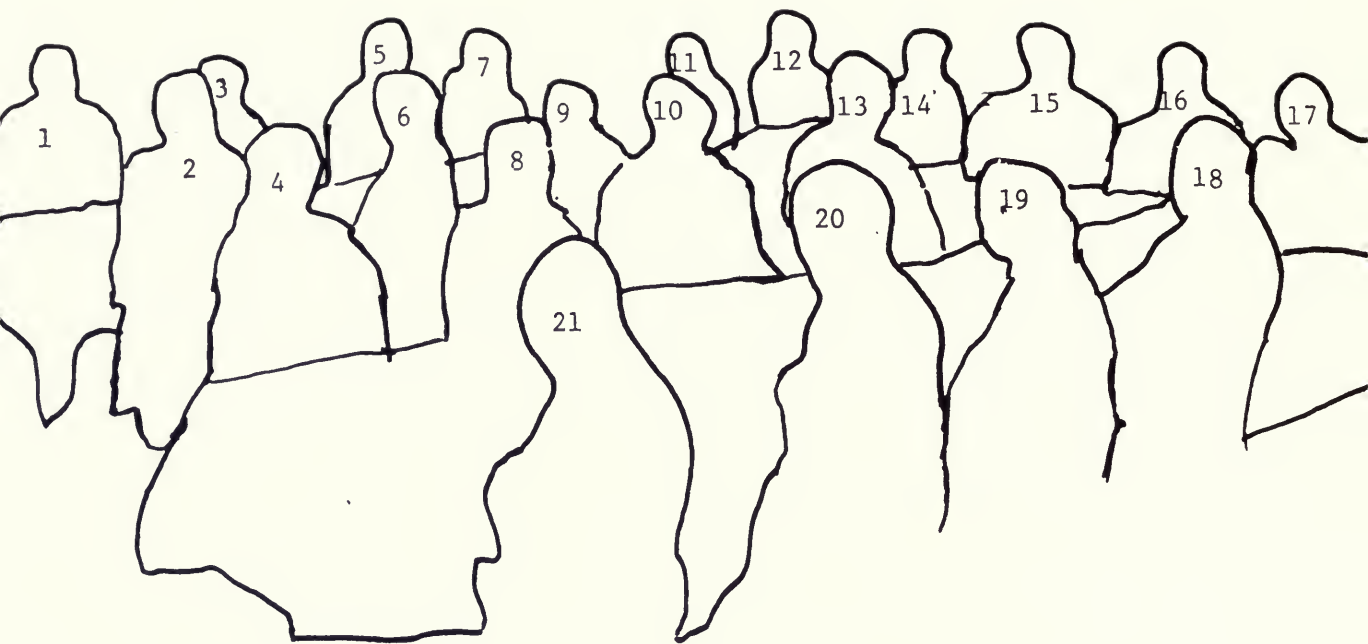
Transcriber: Shannon Page

Final Typist: Shannon Page









1. Taylor Pillsbury
2. H. Boyd Seymour
3. John D. Boden
4. Frederic H. Johnson
5. Clay Miller, Jr.
6. Wynn W. Oliver
7. H. H. Bishopric
8. Gordon Simpson
9. Winston Black
10. Chauncey McKeever

11. Sam Wolcott
12. Francis H. B. Ingall
13. Theodore L. Eliot
14. Churchill C. Peters
15. Clay Miller
16. Sidney V. W. Peters
17. F.W.H. Beauchamp
18. Judson Levensaler
19. Southall R. Pfund
20. S. Beckwith
21. F. Barreda Sherman



Several University Club members gathered together on the occasion of Clay Miller's 90th birthday party in 1969.





## **Churchill Peters**

Churchill Peters, founder of a large San Francisco investment firm, died yesterday in his Pacific Heights home after a long illness. He was 96.

For more than 50 years, Mr. Peters operated the Protected Investors of America firm, a full-service brokerage on Montgomery Street that employs 130 brokers.

A native of Seattle and a graduate of Yale University, Mr. Peters was an Army tank lieutenant during World War I and also served in the French ambulance corps.

In 1934, during the height of the Depression, he founded Protected Investors in the hope, he said, of helping his clients "re-establish themselves." He set up a plan for automatic reinvestment of dividends, which was considered revolutionary at the time, and he actively promoted a new kind of investment called mutual funds. Until recently, he remained active in the firm by advising clients and managing accounts.

Mr. Peters was an accomplished bridge player, tennis player and horseman. He owned a large horse ranch near Santa Cruz.

Surviving is his stepson, Winslow Gibson of San Francisco. A private memorial service will be held in Santa Cruz.



Regional Oral History Office  
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Berkeley, California

Churchill C. Peters

The University Club of San Francisco:  
One Hundred Years of Tradition and Change

An Interview Conducted by  
Ruth Teiser and Lisa Jacobson  
in 1986





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## CHURCHILL C. PETERS

Born in 1898 in Seattle, Churchill C. Peters holds the longest continuous membership in the University Club. He joined in 1923, after he had graduated from Yale University in 1919 and become a financial planner. He was president for two terms, from 1940 to 1942, and led the movement to allow women guests into the club while accompanied by members.





BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name Churchill Crittenden Peters

Date of birth 2 February 1898 Birthplace Seattle, Wa.

Father's full name William Allison Peters

Occupation Attorney Birthplace Atlanta, Ga

Mother's full name Frances Ackers Van Wyck

Occupation Housewife Birthplace San Francisco, Ca

Your spouse Ruth Winslow Gibson

Your children Winslow Gibson (step son) & Sally Anderton (step daughter)

Where did you grow up? Seattle, Wa

Present community San Francisco  
Summit Grammer School, Seattle, Wa 8 years

Education Broadway High School, Seattle, Wa 4 years  
Yale University, New Haven, Ct 4 years

Occupation(s) Financial planner, Chairman Emeritus Protected Investors of America

Areas of expertise stock, bond, mutual funds, parterships, portfolio management,

Other interests or activities gentleman farmer

Organizations in which you are active University Club of S.F.  
Santa Cruz Polo Club



## I THE UNIVERSITY CLUB

[Date of Interview: December 10, 1986]##

First Acquaintance with the Club

Teiser: My first inquiry is about your first knowledge of the University Club. You said that your father was a member of the University Club in Seattle.

Peters: Yes, that's right. The University Club was, to me, just sort of an established way of living. When I came here to San Francisco, several of the people I met were members of the University Club. I was soon invited to submit my name as a possible member, and was accepted. That was my start with the club. I found that many of the young friends that I had met were members. It was quite an acceptable thing.

Teiser: Did you visit the club before you joined it?

Peters: Yes, I visited the club. I was brought here for lunch, and to become acquainted with the club and the facilities.

Teiser: What was your impression of it at that time?

Peters: Well, my impression of the club was that it was physically a very attractive building, and it seemed to be properly run and taken care of. It had a group of people that I would respect as members, and like to become associated with.

Teiser: Were some of them people you had known at Yale?

Peters: A few of them were people I had known at Yale. Most of them were new acquaintances for me.

Teiser: You said that you had come to San Francisco with a shipping company.

Peters: Yes, I came out here with a company called the United American Lines, which was a dream of W. Averell Harriman's to establish a maritime enterprise that would surpass what his father had done in the railroad industry. Harriman had made a pretty good start on it by getting control of several minor American companies, and making a working arrangement with the Hamburg-American Line from Germany, which before World War I had been the premiere shipping company in the world.

#### Limitations on Business Transactions

Teiser: When you joined the University Club, did you expect it to be something that would further your acquaintance in the business community, as well as be a social place for you?

Peters: Well, I didn't join it because I saw it as being a stepping stone to business success. I thought it was more of a social organization, and my business was something that I was to be responsible for developing on my own. Naturally, one might find that, in any group of people that he is associated with, any sort of a club, he is going to find some who will be sympathetic and helpful to him in whatever business enterprise he's trying to develop. I will say I don't think my membership in the University Club has played a very important part at all in my own business experience.

Teiser: As we came in just now, the rule against carrying papers into the dining room was brought to our attention. Has that always stood?

Peters: No, that has not always been. I think it is true that in any club, there is going to be some business discussed between the members who have common problems. But I think that maybe some years ago, it became rather evident that there were a good many people coming here primarily to discuss business, and it was felt that that was infringing on the social aspects. So, I believe they made a ruling that no papers were to be displayed in the dining room, and people should refrain as far as possible from making the club a business center. I think they abide by that very definitely, and apparently in order to be sure that the dining room is not desecrated by having business papers scattered throughout the tables, they have made it very strict, which I think is a good idea. I was quite surprised when Tom down at the door caught me there with a briefcase. I am delighted that he's doing it.



Jacobson: Do you remember how long ago that ruling was made?

Peters: No. I think the ruling was made twenty years ago, probably.

### Club Members

Teiser: When you became a member in July 1923, what was the club like?

Peters: It struck me as being a very congenial group of people who were comfortably established, and well representative of the city and philosophy of San Francisco. It seemed to me a very ideal group to be a part of.

Teiser: You described the various groups within the club. You were discussing the people at the tables. An older group sat at a round table in one corner, and you mentioned their names. Would you mention them again?

Peters: In any group of people, birds of a feather are going to flock together, and the membership naturally divides itself--that is, not in any opposing way, but it begins to segregate into groups that have a common interest. Naturally, age and maturity have a good deal to do with that. The interests that older people have in common motivate them to want to be together. In the club, over in the far right hand corner of the main dining room was the table where the older members lunched. People like Mr. Schmiedell; Mr. J. K. Moffitt; Dr. [Edward E.] Brownell; Mr. Silas [H.] Palmer; sometimes, I suppose, Ward Mailliard, the attorney; Mr. [Alexander R.] Baldwin; Mr. Harry Stetson; Cyril Tobin; and certainly many others of that sort.

Teiser: It must have been a big table if they all came at once.

Peters: Well, they didn't all show up every day, of course. But then there was a younger group. Representative of that group were [N.] Loyall McLaren, Dick McLaren, Kenneth Monteagle, James [W.] Paramore, Ted Paramore. Ted had quite a talent for writing, and his main contribution that I recall is the Ballad of Yukon Jake. Surprisingly, a friend of mine in Seattle recently sent me a copy of the Ballad of Yukon Jake, which I had not thought of for quite a long time. I was glad to get the copy and have it in my file.

Peters: Then, there was a table of people my age. Jim [James A.] Folger, Phil Kelley, I believe Ken McIntosh, whose father was president of the Bank of California, and later, Jack [John I.] Dakin. I can't think of other names at the moment.

Teiser: Well, we were just wondering who were the most prominent club members.

#### Club Officers and Board of Directors

Teiser: During that period, did the officers--the president and so forth--have a strong hand?

Peters: Yes, I think the officers did have a strong hand. In those days, they were really looked up to and were highly respected. It was a considerable honor, as well as a responsibility, to be in the category of an officer or director, or part of the administration of the club.

Teiser: Did people usually start in a lower office and then work up to president?

Peters: Yes, that's what they did. Naturally, in order to become acquainted with the administration, and with the philosophy of the club, a person would normally serve on a committee. Then maybe if activities in the club were appreciated, he might be elected to director, and then from a director he's elected an officer, and that's the way it goes. As in any well-organized organization.

Teiser: Does the board of directors have much influence?

Peters: Yes. I think the board of directors is looked upon as being the final authority. However, as in most cases, the president is the one who, as the executive officer in the organization, implements the policies, and sort of sets the tempo for the club.

Teiser: Thank you for explaining that.

Peters: I think that's about the way it goes.

Prohibition Days

Teiser: Let us get to some of the periods when it must have been tough going here. When you became a member, Prohibition was on.

Peters: Yes, I came in when Prohibition was on, and at that time I don't think the civil regulatory bodies were paying too much attention to the clubs like the University Club. The bar was then on the fourth floor, in the northwest corner of the club, and it was a very attractive little bar. There was a set of lockers behind the bar itself. Every member had his own locker, and his own key to that locker. He could keep his beverages of any sort there, and enjoy them when he wanted to. As far as I knew, no authority ever objected to that practice. The bar was a meeting place for members who wanted to spend a congenial half-hour or so with their friends. There were several who spent more than that time there, and were well-known for doing so. At the moment I don't remember any of their names, although I can see them clearly.

As I came up from the office, my secretary pointed to a picture which I have hanging on the wall there, and she said, "Do you think that would be of any interest to them?" and I brought it along. That's a picture that used to hang on the wall in the bar, and it's a picture of a group of Yale students from the Class of 1913 or '14, or maybe later, enjoying a meeting with Carrie Nation. She had come up to Yale to give the boys a lecture on the evils of drink, and so this little group wanted to make her feel at home, and asked her to come into a little private meeting with them. They were having a nice little chat, and she was the center of the group. They said they wanted to take a picture, so they had a photographer come in, and in those days you had to darken the room. So when the room was darkened, they doctored up the scenery a little bit, and put a glass in Carrie Nation's hand. Somebody made some remark or pledge which seemed to cheer everybody, particularly Carrie [interviewers laugh], and she was giving a smile of approval and appreciation. They snapped the picture. Later, I think somebody drew onto the film a cigarette in one hand.

Now, I cannot tell you exactly who these people are, but I believe one of them was a brother of Stanleigh Arnold, who was a member, of course, of the club. That picture disappeared. Somewhere or other, I was asking about it, and a relative of Stanleigh Arnold said, "I know where there is a duplicate of that picture," and he gave it to me, and I have it in the

Peters: office. I would be glad to have it made available to the club if they would like to hang it up again in the bar, but I don't see exactly where it would fit in with the pictures we have of Hong and of some of the other Asian bartenders that we have had. But it's available.

That was my main remembrance of the bar.

Teiser: After the period of lockers, something disrupted that, I understand.

Peters: Well, I think probably the lockers were there as long as we had Prohibition, and I think when Prohibition went out in 1933, well, there was no more need for the lockers.

Teiser: There was some period when people had to drink in rooms in the club. Do you remember that?

Peters: I don't remember that. I believe there was considerable drinking in the rooms, but I don't think it was confined to the rooms. Maybe it was, but I don't remember that.

#### Living Accommodations

Peters: I lived at the club for two years, starting in 1932. I had the eastern double room on the corner of California and Powell. It was a fine room--a little bit noisy from the cable car, but it was a very nice place for me to make my headquarters.

Teiser: Was that from '32 to '34?

Peters: It was '32 to '33, I guess. When I was married in '33, I moved out.

Teiser: What was it like to live here? Did you have good service?

Peters: Oh, yes. We had very good service. It was very homey, and very pleasant.

Teiser: Did they give you breakfast?

Peters: Oh, yes. They had breakfast. I think they give them breakfast now, too.





This photograph of Carrie Nation, described in Churchill Peters' interview, hangs in the fourth-floor bar.





Meetings of Outside Groups at the Club

Peters: Speaking of breakfast at the club, there was an organization, which I believe is still in existence, called the Economic Round Table of San Francisco. That was along about 1936, '37. It was flourishing here in San Francisco, and there were about fifteen members. I was a member. We had breakfast once a week, every Tuesday morning, at seven o'clock. For want of a pleasant place to have it, why, we had it at the University Club. I arranged that. We had it in the little dining room, the section of the big dining room which is along California Street.

The members of this group were the up-and-coming middle-aged generation, who later became quite prominent in San Francisco. We had two people who were Chairman of the Board of the Bank of America, and several of us who were very prominent in other public affairs. It was a very fine organization. We used to have these talks; every member had to make a talk when his turn came. They found it very, very convenient to have it at the University Club.

Teiser: How many other groups met at the club?

Peters: I think the club has been used by many groups for meetings. Depending upon the size of the meeting, you could have it in here, or in the director's room, or--

Teiser: We're in the Cable Car Room now.

Peters: This is the Cable Car Room. Also, the room downstairs, which I guess is called the Wine Cellar, has held many important meetings.

Teiser: I understand sometimes even the library is used.

Peters: There are groups that meet in the library. There is one group--I am the sponsor of it as far as the club is concerned--that's called the Sometimes Tuesday Club. That is a group of about sixteen Elis, some of whom are members, who meet together three times a year. They had met in various places before I became a member and finally had heard about the University Club and are meeting there now, which is by far the most attractive place, in their opinion, that they have been able to secure to get together in.

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Teiser: I think when the University Club was started in the 1890s, the founders thought college and university groups here in San Francisco, which then had no homes, should join together to make the University Club, in effect. So that's coming back to that idea.

Peters: Yes. I know we used to do that with the Yale group. A Yale group would have a meeting here, or Dartmouth group, and I think that's been going on for some time. I believe now the groups have become larger so that it's difficult for the club to handle that many people, but that was probably one of the reasons why the club was started.

#### Financial Difficulties

Teiser: The Depression, which you spoke of in relation to your own work, I suppose hit the University Club in its membership dues department.

Peters: Yes, it did. It hit the University Club quite hard, and I think it was one thing that took a little steam out of the momentum of the club. Of course, the membership went down to a fairly low figure; I can't remember now what the figure was, but that of course in turn slowed down everything. Then, as we recovered from the economic problems that came along in the early '30s, we began to pick up momentum again and pick up activities. Then, when World War II came along, we really were hit below the belt. We had the arrangement then that anyone who joined the services, of one sort or another, was either relieved of dues entirely or his dues were reduced to practically about a tenth of the ordinary dues.

#### Presidency, 1940-42

Peters: At that time, I had become president. I guess I was president from '40 to '42. Things had been going along fairly well until we lost all these members--that is, temporarily. We were very much strapped. That's when our real financial difficulties hit us. It got down to a point where the club had very little money in the treasury, and very little in the bank, and we couldn't pay decent salaries. It got down to the point where our cash position was so bad that we couldn't

Peters: even get deliveries of supplies and groceries, except by paying cash on delivery at the door. This was very difficult to handle.

We finally got one of the members to, for a short space of time, act as the manager.

Teiser: Who was that?

Peters: It was Lloyd Means, and he acted as manager for a time, and then there was another--he paid no dues, in return for which he acted as the manager. The managers' names are in the record, and I can't think of them. We had Brennan, and Brennan was devoted to the club. Oh, I don't know whether we ought to put this in, but this is just to make a note of it. We occasionally found shortages when we did have a chance to audit. In the two instances in which I was involved on behalf of the club, we made arrangements with the person who had used some of the club money for his own benefit. Eventually, he paid it back.

#### Stanford Mortgage

Peters: Also, at that point in time, we were unable to pay on our mortgage. Frank Adams was our vice-president at the time I was president. He later succeeded me as president. Our mortgage was held by Stanford University, and I believe it was Frank Walker who was business manager at that time for Stanford. Frank Adams, being a Stanford man, approached him, and between the three of us we worked out a very satisfactory arrangement and found Stanford very, very considerate in helping us through that time, in waiving the interest and whatnot.

We also had a note with the Crocker Bank, and Mr. J. K. Moffitt, who was a member, was very considerate in the handling of that. I think he forgave us interest on that note, and delayed collection of the principal over quite a period of time.

Teiser: Had Stanford held a mortgage since the beginning?

Peters: I think they probably had, because the club bought the land from Stanford. I'm sure it was from Stanford all the time.

## Admission of Women as Guests

Peters: This is the important thing: it was during all this critical financial thing that, while I was president, I conceived the idea that one of the best answers would be if we could permit the membership to have their ladies have some use of the club. They would increase the use and activities of the club. This was an unheard-of suggestion, and I knew it was going to be met with great resistance. So I spent some time, several months, gathering data from various clubs around the country where women had some access to the club.

My original experience in that came from the University Club in Seattle, where they had a Ladies Annex, where ladies were not members of the club, but the wives and family members of the University Club could use the Annex for meals--for dinners, and lunches, and they didn't have to be accompanied by their spouse at that time. That worked out so well in Seattle. It also had worked out in Portland, where I had lived for a short time in 1928 and 1929, and it also had worked out in the University Club in New York, and several others, so I thought I had enough ammunition to fire the bullet.

I had a lunch for the membership, and invited everybody to come, and a great many people attended, including many of the older, more conventional members. They met the suggestion with considerable horror, but I pointed out to them the fact that it had been done elsewhere, and was very successful and enhanced the use of the club and pleasure of the members. Finally, we agreed that we would permit women to be in the club as the guest of a member after five o'clock.

We thought we'd start it that way for cocktails, and then we even got a little enthusiastic. After we got people over the hump, we decided we would build a Ladies Annex, sort of a Ladies Department, on the fourth floor. We had an examination made by structural engineers, and found that the fourth floor presumably would support another active part of the club. We were going to have an extra entrance on California Street, with an elevator coming up to the fourth floor. That would be the Ladies Annex. By the time we had that all figured out, the war had come along and one of the proper government agencies put out the ruling that there would be no steel used for something as frivolous as a Ladies Annex for the University Club.



Peters: So we gave up the idea, and then were faced with the problem: "Well, we want to be sure and carry it out so that we can bring ladies in here. What are we going to do?" It was very difficult to convince ourselves that it would be all right to have the ladies use the main entrance on Powell Street. But we finally said, "Well, that's the only thing we can do. We will let them use the main entrance, and they'll be limited to the third floor." That was the start of ladies coming into the club. I'm sure that it saved the club from going into at least Chapter 11, if not further. That, together with the accommodations granted us by Stanford on the mortgage and by the Crocker Bank through Mr. Moffitt on the note, kept us going. We were able to continue the negotiations with Stanford, and later on, pay off the mortgage. So that was the main crisis of the club during my experience in the administration.

#### Present-day Use of the Club by Women

Teiser: Are women still allowed in on the same basis that they were then?

Peters: Well, since that worked out all right--they behaved themselves and didn't cause any problems--why, we let them come in for lunch. They can now come for lunch, and therefore we had a nice lunch upstairs today. However, I don't think they can come without being accompanied by a member.

Teiser: How about accommodations in the rooms downstairs: can they stay overnight?

Peters: Yes, they can stay here. I'm not sure whether it has to be a couple or whatnot, but the room situation was something later, with which I'm not too familiar. I understand it's very successful and has been another big help in bringing income into the club.

#### Use of the Club by Servicemen during World War II

Teiser: During your presidency, then, you also gave hospitality to service people, did you not?

Peters: Oh, yes, of course. A serviceman had to be proposed, and he had to go through some sort of a very superficial process of election to be granted use of the club. During the war, the club was a great rendezvous for people in the active service, which was very good because San Francisco was a clearance port for people going out to the Pacific and coming back from the Pacific. That was a very big factor in the club, and a great advantage. It gave a great deal of pleasure and afforded the poor guys who were away from home and in the service some place to hang their hats in comfort.

Teiser: I suppose you did charge them for meals and drinks and so forth?

Peters: Oh, yes. They had to pay, or their sponsor had to pay. It wasn't free. I think maybe they didn't have to pay any dues or entrance fee.

Teiser: That increased the use of the club over that period?

Peters: A great many of them used it, yes.

#### Attributes of a Good Club Member

Teiser: Would you describe what makes a good club member, a club member with all the attributes one could wish?

Peters: Well, I'd say, in the first place, he has to be a respectable and responsible person. He has to--I can't say he or she, because she is not a member as yet--but he has to have the capability of associating in a friendly and compatible way with other people. Then he has to be interested in doing that, and have some desire to have a place where he can have a rendezvous with people with whom he's congenial. He might be better off if he finds some of the facilities of the club are useful to him. We have a fine library, with a lovely place to pursue the study and the use of literature. We have also the squash courts. If he enjoys the facilities, that makes him be a more active member. He should take an interest in some of the activities that other members are engaging in. He must be responsible for his conduct, and pay his bills.

Value of Club to its Members

Teiser: On the other side of the coin, what are the main values of the club itself to its individual members?

Peters: Well, I think the club facilitates the opportunity, if that's the proper way to express it, for a person to get together in a convenient and congenial meeting with his associates, with his peers. They exchange ideas and enjoy the good things of life. To me, it's very much more pleasant to be able to meet your friends and have your meals in the atmosphere that's provided by the club, rather than going to a public restaurant which is no doubt a public necessity, but you have all kinds of inconveniences. I don't think you're able to enjoy the company of your peers nearly as well as you can at the club--except on special occasions like going to some performance together where the actual reason for your getting together is some other activity than is provided by the club. I don't know whether that answers your question.

Teiser: Yes, I think so.

Club Activities

Jacobson: This is sort of backtracking a little bit: you mentioned that in the late '30s a whole bunch of activities picked up. What sort of activities were those?

Peters: Well, one thing which didn't exist when I was an active member was the Wine Committee. It seems that one of the social amenities today is to be thoroughly acquainted with wines and qualities of wines. We have a Wine Committee that is very active and very knowledgeable. That's one group.

We have these dialogue evenings, where a subject of common interest may be selected, and a qualified person who is knowledgeable in that area is selected as the moderator, you might say. We had one the other day with Ted Eliot, who was the ambassador from Afghanistan--he's now head of the Asia Foundation--to talk on Asiatic events in the far Pacific.

They have a boxing night, and I don't know whether members of the club box or somebody else boxes. I've been planning to come, but I haven't. They have club dances, and every year we've had the Whiffenpoofs come to the club and

Peters: sing at lunch. They have luncheon meetings with a presumably interesting speaker. Some of them turn out to be what we thought they'd be, and some of them don't.

I think now they're getting so many more of those things going on that you look at the club calendar, and you can busy yourself all year long. For instance, one's coming up now where the club's got group tickets--they have forty seats--to go to see the Nutcracker Suite. You subscribe to that, have dinner at the club; they take you from the club to the theatre in a bus, bring you back in a bus, and you don't have to go through all the rigamarole of trying to get a seat and parking your car and all that. And you have the congenial act of maybe being with some friends. There are all kinds of activities of that sort.

I don't participate in as many of them as I used to. That's why I can't rattle them off as much as I should be able to.

#### Minstrel Shows

Jacobson: When you were first a member, what kind of activities did you participate in?

Peters: At that time, the club didn't have many planned activities. They didn't have these lunches where you have a guest speaker. Our main thing at that time was a minstrel show. That was a wonderful thing. We probably started to rehearse in October, and you had a meeting once a week after work. Loyall McLaren was always the interlocutor in the minstrel show. Did you ever see a minstrel show?

Jacobson: No.

Peters: Well, it was comprised of about fourteen members seated in a sort of semi-circle with the interlocutor in the center, and it used to be a very much accepted form of entertainment. We had, at that time, the Paramore brothers, who were very good at making up dialogue that would go with the show. Loyall McLaren was very very competent and impressive, and a delightful interlocutor. Other people had certain talents or mannerisms, so that they particularly fitted into the show. That was the main thing.



### Squash Games

Peters: Then, the next thing that I was particularly interested in was the squash. I remember when we didn't have any squash courts. One of the other members of the club at that time was Jimmy Davies, who was a California state champion if not a national champion. A very charming, delightful fellow. Covington Janin, who was then a member, was a squash player, too. There was a good deal of discussion as to whether we should have a squash court or not--I think I was director at the time--and we decided to have a squash court. Janin and Davies pushed for it very actively. I played squash there.

But shortly after that, I left to go up north, so I didn't get much use out of it myself.

### The Last Minstrel Show

Teiser: Why were the minstrel shows dropped?

Peters: Well, I attended the last minstrel show. I think this ought to be off the record to some extent. The minstrel shows had gotten to be a very, very important thing, and quite a finished product. I think it was probably around 1927 that the show was the most highly developed and organized. We didn't have the facilities in the club to stage the show, so we rented a ballroom over at the Fairmont Hotel across the street. But we have the dinner here at the club.

The minstrel show had come to be regarded as a rather important function, and a classy function. So, for that night, we had a dinner in the main dining room, where we had lunch today. The whole place was full, I don't know how many, maybe a hundred people.

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Peters: The dining room was set up in a very spectacular way. One of the older members had as a guest a very prominent person who came from Paris, I think, and he had a very fancy, long-stemmed cigarette holder. A beautiful ivory cigarette holder, which I think he had just purchased in the Far East. Of course, before any function of this sort, why, it was customary for people to partake in a little bit of stimulation, and there had been a considerable amount of that, as naturally would be. Which was part of the beauty of an evening's show.



Peters: We all sat down, and then this gentleman, who was seated in a prominent place at the table, lit his cigarette. Everybody noticed it, including one of our members, who might as well be nameless and was noted for rather exotic and extreme actions from time to time--impetuous, I would say. Apparently--I don't know whether he didn't smoke himself, but he didn't like the idea of the long-stemmed holder, and he went around to the table where this man was, grabbed it out of his mouth, and broke it. He said, "We don't like showy things like that around here." And that created quite an impression that things were getting a little bit out of hand.

When we went across to the Fairmont for the show, everything started out fine. I wasn't in the show, because I was going away at that time--I was already scheduled to leave. Covvy Janin and I were dressed in policemen's uniforms, and we were supposed to keep order. I'm afraid we had also partaken a little bit [interviewers laugh], and this same fellow, who had sort of created a bad impression at the dinner table, began to get obstreperous down in one of the front rows. We thought it was time that he be removed, and we went down. While he was about our size, there were two of us and one of him. So we took him out, but that caused quite a little problem there. It interrupted the show, and made an unfortunate interruption.

The show then went on, but just before it was over, there was another incident. The curtain was a great big heavy sheet rolled up on a pole and hung from the ceiling. It was a temporary affair that somebody had put up in the Fairmont Hotel, but they hadn't done it very securely and the rope broke at one end, and the pole fell [laughter] and hit Dick McLaren on the head, who was sitting in the front row, and really ended the show in no uncertain terms. [laughter]

By Tuesday of the next week--the show was on Friday night--I was called in by the president--I think I was a director--to explain my conduct as a policeman. He was severe, but rather kindly disposed, and I think the question was that maybe I should be suspended. But fortunately, I was put on probation instead, and I left for New York a couple of days later. I didn't come back here for several years, and that's why I don't know why they didn't have any more planned, but I've often thought that maybe it got just too out of hand.

Jacobson: One of the Club's written histories suggested that the repeal of Prohibition had something to do with the ending of the minstrel shows.

Peters: Well, do you think that what they were driving at was the fact that, with the repeal of Prohibition, the stimulants would be so easily available that we'd have more violent episodes? [interviewers laugh] That's the only thing I can think of.

Jacobson: I don't know. It was rather vague.

Peters: Who said that?

Jacobson: That was the history written by Nathaniel Blaisdell.

Peters: Well, I think that's what he meant. I think we have to leave that to the imagination.

#### The Aborted Fairmont Hotel Joint Venture

Peters: I think we ought to have this on the record, too, and that is the fact that--I don't have any idea about a lot of dissension in the club, but there are always differences of opinion. The board of directors had made this deal with [Benjamin] Swig, where the club was going to be bound to go in on a joint venture with Fairmont Hotel and buy this place next door. By the terms of the agreement, the Fairmont Hotel was the dominant partner, and for practical purposes it left the University Club as the unfortunate orphan who was putting up his share of the money but wasn't going to have sufficient control of what was going to happen.

When that became known, it was something like the unfortunate predicament that our poor friend Reagan is in now. Only we were in the position of being members, not necessarily the bosses. But when that became known by some of the older members of the University Club, it was perfectly obvious that it was a very poor arrangement for the club. There was a good deal of discussion; this took two or three months, and I think it was brought up at the annual meeting. There was enough feeling about it that there was a committee appointed of Henry Hardy and myself, and I can't think of the other fellow's name. He was a member of the other group

Peters: that had been sympathetic with this arrangement. (We thought it best that we have one of them and two of us.) It was agreed that the club didn't want this arrangement, even though the board had agreed to it on the behalf of the club.

So, we were designated and given the authority to tell Mr. Swig that the club membership as a whole would not go along with the deal, which we did. We had a very interesting meeting with Mr. Swig. He said he was very sorry to hear it, because he would have liked to have been a part owner in the club building so that he would have had assurance of air rights. However, the deal was cancelled. I'm not sure whether Mr. Hardy could tell us, because his memory would be better than mine on this, what happened to the air rights: whether the club agreed that it would never do anything of disadvantage to the Fairmont Hotel, or just we left it out. That was an important event.

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Chauncey McKeever

The University Club of San Francisco:  
One Hundred Years of Tradition and Change

An Interview Conducted by  
Lisa Jacobson  
in 1987





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**CHAUNCEY MCKEEVER**

Born in Mexico City in 1907, Chauncey McKeever received an undergraduate degree at Oxford University in 1929 and a J. D. at the University of San Francisco in 1946, pursuing a career in banking and investment management before becoming an attorney. He is a life member of the University Club, having joined in 1936 and serving as president three terms, in 1951-1952 and from 1962 to 1964.



BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name Chauncey Warren Lorenzo McKeever  
Date of birth August 10, 1907 Birthplace Mexico City, D.F.  
Father's full name Carlos Bernard McKeever  
Occupation Petroleum Technologist Birthplace Heidelberg, Germany  
Mother's full name Dora Maud Alderson  
Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ Birthplace Durham, England  
Your spouse Doris McKeever  
Your children Sandra Daba, Ann Hatch,  
Till Mercer, Chauncey Rodziako  
Where did you grow up? Various European Countries, 1906 in England  
Present community San Francisco, California  
Education English Public School 1914-1925.  
Christ Church, Oxford 1926-29  
Occupation(s) Banking 1929-36, Investment Counsel 1936-41  
University of San Francisco Law School 1941-1946  
Areas of expertise \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Other interests or activities U.S. Navy. 1941-44. Lieutenant to  
Commander (1944)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Organizations in which you are active San Francisco Art Institute





## I CHAUNCEY MCKEEVER

[Interview 1: 2 February 1987]##

[The following summarizes Chauncey McKeever's more detailed account of his childhood, education, and early professional life up to the time he joined the University Club.]

Chauncey McKeever was born in Mexico City in 1907. Though an American citizen, Mr. McKeever did not come to the United States until 1929, after graduating from Oxford University. His father, a mining engineer and petroleum technologist who Mr. McKeever says "could think in four languages and speak about eight more," travelled all over the world working for various oil companies. Those travels, Mr. McKeever says, explain "why I have a sister, two years older, who was born in Budapest, I was born in Mexico, and our younger sister was born in Edinburgh about two years later."

Mr. McKeever spent his boyhood in London living with his mother and two sisters while his father was working on projects in Russia, Venezuela, and Columbia. He attended Cranleigh, a public school in Surrey, just south of London, where he studied Classics, including Latin--"I had to write Latin compositions, even Latin verses"--and played Rugby in fields often muddied by three inches of rain.

From Cranleigh, Mr. McKeever proceeded to Christ Church at Oxford, which in those days, he says, was a "very low key" place. "It was almost a social occasion. There were a lot of clubs in the college and then there were mainly drinking clubs, some called debating clubs," he recalls. "You all lived in the greatest luxury. I had a suite of three rooms: a large living

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##This symbol indicates that a tape or segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes, see pages 276-77.

room of two windows overlooking a Georgian quadrangle, a fireplace and a bedroom off that, and a little smaller one which was laughingly called a study. You kept your wine and beer and golf clubs and suitcases in that. Your meals, except for dinner, were served to you in your rooms."

Upon graduation from Oxford in 1929, Mr. McKeever headed for New York, where his namesake uncle had a seat on the New York Stock Exchange and had plans for him to enter the brokerage business. Those plans collapsed, however, when the stock market crashed in October, and Mr. McKeever found a new career in Cleveland with the Union Trust Bank. Within two years, hard times had forced him out of a job. "There were two banks there: the Cleveland Trust and the Union Trust," McKeever explains. "The Union Trust was run basically by the Republicans and the Cleveland Trust by Democrats. When Roosevelt was elected he had to close one of the banks so he obviously chose to close the Union Bank."

Mr. McKeever packed off to Chicago where he worked as an investment counselor for three years before coming to California with his bride, Jean Wingfield, in 1934.

## II THE UNIVERSITY CLUB

### Prohibition Days

Jacobson: How did you find out about the University Club when you first arrived in San Francisco?

McKeever: I think my wife had some former beaux who were around here. I met them and they told me about it. One of them asked me up here for lunch and I liked it very much. In those days, it was a very different sort of organization. This, don't forget, was during Prohibition. Drinking was not a vice; it was an industry. Not liquor, drinking. People just drank everything and anything--"Shoe polish up," they'd say.

This was a drinking town. The bar in the evening was fifty or sixty people pushing and shoving and getting and swallowing practically straight gin. Now, in the evening, if there are five people there it's a crowd. [chuckles] Prohibition wasn't repealed until 1933 and after that I think it quieted down very much because the social life of the club during Prohibition was much more intense. For example, the bartender, Hong, was also a cook—he was Chinese; I have a picture of him in the bar--and he would stay up all night long as long as anybody was in the club. They'd get awfully drunk and he would make them supper. He'd make hangtown fries. I don't know if you've had them; they're delicious--oysters and eggs.

I'm afraid some of the people used to move off in droves to some of the whorehouses in town. Sally Stanford was supposed to have a charge account for the members of the University Club. People who didn't have cash with them or had their pockets picked, could get a bill and pay sometime later. So that was the social life of the club.

Rugby and Cricket Games

McKeever: There's another side to it, that I rather liked, and that was Rugby. The club actually fielded a team. Now I played against the University of California in California Stadium. That's a very lonely experience with thirty people on the field and ten wives in the stands worrying about the health of their husbands. It's a very rough game; there's no padding in it. You don't wear helmets or shoulder pads or anything like that. I played in Stanford Stadium against Stanford in the same circumstances. But that was fun; they were good players and they were football players who wanted a little change from the discipline of American football where all the training is so regimented that it's no longer fun. Rugby's a pleasant game, a joyous game. Nobody gets hurt because although they have no padding, they don't try to kill each other. The idea is to stop a man's forward progress any way you can.

I liked the Rugby games and I even played some cricket. I found in Marin County there were two or three cricket clubs. I found they were mainly staffed by the chauffeurs and butlers of the rich who were English imported servants. It's very much like what you call "Village cricket" in England. I used to play that when I was at Oxford. You get a group of good friends and you tour some part of the countryside, staying at a pub, and they would arrange three or four matches. Really, it's so bucolic; you play on very small grounds. They sometimes have to move the cows off to make room for the pitch.

It's a very social game. You stop for lunch, you stop for tea, and then you go on until it gets dark. Whoever's ahead then, is ahead. They don't keep any records of it. [laughs] I think they may in the village and the pub. You all go to the pub and drink and spend the night. Very friendly, very low key.

Jacobson: Did these English cricket traditions hold true when you played with the University Club?

McKeever: No, we played in Golden Gate Park.



The War Years##

McKeever: After Pearl Harbor, I got a commission in the United States Navy as a lieutenant and was sent to Quonset, Rhode Island, for naval aviation training. I was put into the combat intelligence group and stayed another two months there, then shipped out on a carrier to the North Atlantic. I was out on the U.S.S. Ranger. That would be considered a tugboat size now compared to present nuclear carriers which are about at least ten times as big. Then, when the war was over in '45, I came back here and back to the club.

Jacobson: So you weren't a member of the club for that time period?

McKeever: Oh, no, I was a member. I think I joined in '36, and I was a member through the war. The club was very nice: they suspended the dues of all people in the armed services. I was also a member of the Burlingame Club and they didn't. But before I left, I gave them five or six hundred dollars towards my monthly dues and I forgot all about it.

I found out about it when I was up going around on this carrier in New Foundland, Argentia, a dreadful place. The awful thing was that nobody on the carrier--and there were three thousand people aboard--had had any mail at all from anybody in three months. The Navy had fouled it up in such a way that they had a freighter full of mail that followed us along one day late. Everywhere we were it would arrive the day after and, of course, there was so much secrecy about ship movements, but they finally caught up with us in Iceland in Reykjavik.

I remember the extraordinary atmosphere when the freighter came alongside and they asked for volunteers for an unloading party and the ship almost capsized as everyone went over to help unload. We got the two or three hundred sacks of mail on board and then a storm came up and they had to secure that until the next day. But some of the mail was there and distributed. We had a task force of about ten ships: a carrier, two cruisers, a tanker, eight destroyers. We had mail for the whole task force, so a lot of the other boats got their mail, too.

But that night I remember it was dead silence as everybody was reading letters. People had learned to number letters so that you'd open them in the right order. I only had one letter from the Burlingame Club telling me I was posted for non-payment of dues.

Club Life in the Thirties

Jacobson: I want to return to when you first joined the club. Now you said you joined when Prohibition was on, so that was--?

McKeever: No, wait a minute. That must be wrong because Prohibition--

Jacobson: --or did you join after Prohibition?

McKeever: No, it was after because during Prohibition they didn't have an open bar. The room in there had an old row of lockers and people kept their drinks there and they would carry their bottles into the bar where they got ice, soda, mixers, and cherries for the Mannhattans. Then they would take it back and lock it up. I came after that. I must have joined after. I think it says [on this outline] that I joined in '36. Prohibition was repealed in '33, so I wasn't here during Prohibition, but I'd been here as a guest many times before I joined.

It was a very friendly club. Anybody who belonged who'd see somebody in the street who was walking to a bank would say, "Come on up to the club and have dinner and some drinks some day." They're very friendly people, nothing studied about them at all. Of course, it was also just a joyful cable car ride up the hill.

I remember how very wild it was during Prohibition, but I guess, as I say, I didn't belong to the club as a member until '36. I liked to play the Rugby games and the cricket games. Not much gambling—I never saw any high stakes--anything at all.

Status of Other Local Private Men's Clubs

McKeever: Of course, it's a young man's club and one of the things that used to irritate me was that a lot of people joined the club as a stepping stone to the Pacific Union Club where the dues and the entrance fees are much higher and the waiting list is several years.

I remember a lady I knew said her husband had come out from the east with some bank and she asked me if I'd put him up for the University Club. I said, "He's fine"; he was a Harvard man. I put him up and asked him to lunch and introduced him to a few people. He was very thankful. He said, "Well Chauncey, this was good of you, but, you know, I won't be much of a member because I'm just using it as a stepping stone to the Pacific Union Club. When they have a vacancy, I'm told I'll be admitted." I said,

McKeever: "I'm afraid I'm going to withdraw my nomination. You'll have to get somebody else to do it." He was very upset about that, but it seems if you join the club you should not use it for another purpose.

The same thing with the Bohemian Club. It was very popular, but it was mainly for the people with some sort of talent. People could sing, or paint, or play the piano. It was very active in the performing arts. Of course, as you probably know, they have a big production in the Grove every summer. Their plays take months of rehearsal and thousands of dollars in props, costumes, coaches, and electronics. But this club has only had a few flourishes in the arts.

### California-Stanford Games

McKeever: I remember the California-Stanford game. This was before the days of television or even radio. They had a telephone line they had connected with the Stanford stadium or the California stadium. They had someone over there telephoning in information. They had a big blackboard up in the bar and somebody who knew football would draw lines where the ball was and keep the score. Everybody was drinking and having a good time. It was much more comfortable than in the stadium.

That went on until one day when [laughs] it really got out of hand. The man whose job was drawing the lines on the blackboard was a former football coach of California, a big, big tough fellow--I think he came from the United States Naval Academy.\* When the game was all over--people heard the whistle blow--we turned the board around the other way and there was the most obscene picture I have ever seen that he'd been drawing backwards. [laughter] It was absolutely unforgettable. Faintly to do with the football game.

### Club Fellowship

Jacobson: What was it about the club that made you decide to join in '36?

McKeever: It was good fellowship.

I found, as most people do, that business acquaintances are rather dull company because they're interested in things they have to be interested in, of course, but to the extent that they preclude other interests. Right now, I find it's boring as hell

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\*Mr. Ingram, See page 250

McKeever: to go downtown even to the jolliest restaurants and bars because people are all talking business, business, business, as it's considered a sort of necessity. Talk about anything different, they think you're queer.

I like to talk, I like to listen, and I enjoy good company and good food and the drink. This club has it all.

### Drinking

Jacobson: You talked about the social intensity of the club during Prohibition time. Did drinking continue to play an important role in the social life of the club after that?

McKeever: Well, I've thought about that a lot and my conclusion was that in the war years, which was approximately four years, the unmarried couples were separated and they missed being together. So when the war was over, they started drinking at home. Instead of coming here after the office and drinking until 7:30 or 8:00 and lurching home with a good buzz on, they would go home pretty soon. The bar traffic dropped off to practically nothing.

Then they allowed women in the club, which they never did before, and that brought some of them back because the food was good, the premises were good, and now they allow women to join them at the bar. They haven't got women members yet, but there is always a movement on to do it, and the older people in the club hrump and stamp their feet saying, "We'll burn the place down before we admit women." But it'll come, I'm sure.

Jacobson: I understand that the University Club admitted women in 1942. What was the response of the club?

McKeever: Admitted as members?

Jacobson: Not as members, but just as guests; they were allowed on the premises.

McKeever: Oh, I was at war then; I wouldn't know. When I came back, they never mentioned it. [laughter]



Refinancing the Club after the War

McKeever: That was a terrible time when we came back. The club, which has a maximum membership, I think, of 500 and right now is about 490, was down to 67 paying members. All the rest, including myself, had dues suspended because as being in the armed forces overseas, we couldn't use the club. There was no income at all, but somebody had to pay for the light and the heat and the help and so forth. With sixty-seven paying members it was absolutely ludicrous, so they borrowed money--largely from Stanford. I don't know why but Stanford has always been awfully generous and kind.

The first problem we had when I was president was to get this loan refinanced. A gentleman called Leon de Fremery, who was a very distinguished lawyer here in town, was largely responsible for the refinancing. He was a great yachtsman; he sailed from the English Channel into the Mediterranean without going through the Straits of Gibraltar. He took all the canals in France and he had the whole thing worked out: what time the bridges were lifted, what the tolls were, and what headroom he had. He was the most meticulous, darling person. He only died about seven or eight years ago. He was a good businessman, too, and hocked the club completely. He got rid of all the bank loans, took out temporary loans to keep meeting the payroll and that sort of thing, put a big, fat mortgage on the club and increased the dues. And Stanford went along with it.

They went along with it until the early sixties. I found a photograph the other day of a party in the club where they were burning the mortgage. This was in 1962. They had a big silver bowl and they put some very valuable brandy in it, set fire to it, and burned up this mortgage. They were obligated to pay 4 1/4 percent and the next day they were out borrowing money at 8 percent. That was the great gesture on the part of the directors of the club. [laughter] Stanford was glad to get its money back, but it was a stupid thing to do.

We have assessments now, and we have another thing called minimum monthly accounts. If you don't spend a certain amount of money a quarter, they'll charge it to you anyway. I think it's a terrible thing to do. But I'm no longer a director. I haven't been for a long time and they have their problems.



Club Managers

McKeever: The members continue to grumble and complain; we have a very good manager now, but we've had some very strange managers. Some are absolutely incredible. One of them should have been in jail because he stole everything that wasn't nailed down. Now we have an excellent manager; very quiet.\* All you do is say something to him and he makes a note. A day or two later, he'll call you up or write you a note telling you what he's done about it. That's something that we've never had before. We've always had a lot of excuses.

Chinese Employees

McKeever: I remember [laughs] a very old gentleman who lived at the club. He was a widower--must have been eighty. He came to live at this club--he had a room here--and he brought his servant with him. His servant was Chinese, but he wasn't the same tong as the other Chinese employees here. For example, Hong, the bartender, was one of the Hong-tongs and the other waiters were all Hong-tongs. This boy was not, but he was a bit of an operator and every time a vacancy came up, one of his Chinese clansman came in. Pretty soon, the Hong-tongs were a minority--the whole club was taken over by this guy.

Recollections of Clay Miller

McKeever: Clay Miller was an old club member who used to love to play dominos. He was a very courtly old gentleman, and every year he gave a dinner party for all the ladies who asked him out as their escort over the year. He'd take a big table in the dining room right down the middle and have candles and flowers. I remember once being there over in one of the corner tables. He didn't have a private room; it wasn't probably big enough for the table. These ladies were really fixed up with all their diamonds, light lace, and stuff in their hair. It was almost a New Yorker cartoon. Anyhow, I remember looking at them and seeing a long table with a dinner jacket; he was the only man there. I guess he had at least thirty, fifteen on each side. He was at the end of the table and they had guinea hen under a glass bell. When it's served, the bell is taken off.

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\*Desmond Elder

McKeever: I saw him the next day. I said, "Clay, that was a very spectacular, beautiful party you gave last night." He said, "It was an absolute disgrace. The guinea hen was so tough, nobody could get their knife into it at all." He said, "That was the worst thing. Ladies don't eat a lot anyway and I think his portions were far too large, but the birds he had there were just old stringy things, inedible. So I went down to talk to the manager. I was really angry. I said, 'This is my most important party of the year and I hate to see the thing mucked up like this.' He said, 'What's wrong?' I said, 'Well, the guinea hen was absolutely inedible. Nobody could get a fork into it, let alone a knife.' The manager said, 'Oh,'--he's a Cockney-type--'you should have ordered the steak.'" [laughter] That made him so mad he couldn't speak.

### Squash Courts

Jacobson: During the times when membership was low, like during the Depression and then during the war, what did the club do to attract new members?

McKeever: Well, I think probably the thing was the squash courts. There was just one when I was a member first. Perfectly adequate, one small building and two courts. To my amazement, it was one of the very few in this part of the country. California and Stanford had their courts, but as far as non-collegiate squash was concerned there was really nowhere else to go. Some bright team of directors figured that could be improved, so they built another squash court and a doubles squash court. There were only twenty-two doubles squash courts in the country.

While they were at it, they put in a steam room and a small gymnasium. Even better than that, they put in a laundry so all the club laundry--the napkins, sheets, pillow slips, and all--were all laundered under the squash courts where they have wonderful steam rooms and drying rooms. I don't know much about that sort of thing, but it's very efficient and you're absolutely unaware of it except the linen is always fresh and well ironed.

That squash court: they had a twelve love seat garden to watch the tournaments. The best squash I've ever seen in my life. I've come to the conclusion that you really have to be an Indian to play good squash. Unbelievable! Have you ever seen a squash game?

Jacobson: No.

McKeever: Oh, come and see it. We've got a big old seating thing. You can get two hundred people there watching the game. There's heavy plexiglass so you won't be hit in the head with a ball. The ball is a black-brown thing and you hit it like a bullet. But it's a very good game because "squash" not only implies the compactness of the game but also the little compact of time.

I used to run up the hill during lunch hour and meet a friend here and play two or three games of squash. I'd take a shower and come up here and have a sandwich and get back to the office in an hour and a quarter. So the idea of the game is you don't sit around like tennis, yawn and drink juice and something. It's a very good thing for a city. Of course, nowadays people jog, but that takes space, too.

I think the squash courts are very important now. They have a Squash Committee of about twenty people. They tell you all the important tournaments they have here: all the West Coast championships, sometimes international championships. And it all helps [financially], because they always have a dinner and I'm sure they always arrange to have a bar downstairs for the thirsty spectators.

I think the squash courts are the real facility that has attracted membership, particularly young people. As you get older you don't care so much about exercise. J. P. Morgan's remark to somebody who said, "You never take the exercise, Mr. Morgan," was, "Oh, yes, but I do. I get sufficient exercise acting as a pall bearer for my friends who do exercise."

Jacobson: How did the tradition of the squash tournaments get started?

McKeever: Oh, it was before I joined. They had this one court only, but then it got improved. You see, we have four courts now: a doubles court and three single courts. You ought to go down and take a look at it. The curious thing is that the women seem to have taken up with the squash business. [laughs] I live up the hill, a few blocks, and my wife and I have come here from time to time to see some of the squash tournaments, appalled to find that squash wives--some of them play, too--just shove you around like high school teachers do. "Get over here." "Stand in line there." "Don't crowd." "No, you can't sit there. That's for somebody else." [laughs] I said to my wife, "Let's get out of here." The women use it a lot, which is a good idea, I guess. If you can't fight them, join them.



Entertainment

Jacobson: What sort of entertainment activities did the University Club sponsor?

McKeever: Well, the thing I like most is the music. The last time there was a string quartet here; they must have played for two hours and there were probably fifty people sitting around here. Absolutely beautiful. There is a man called Nicolas McGegan who organizes the group, who's an expert in medieval instruments and baroque music. There was a flute, cello, viola, and violin.

There are wonderful events two or three times a year when they have a musical dinner. They serve a course of dinner, and then when that's taken away, a chamber group plays music maybe for twenty minutes. It's a very pleasant evening--very good food and good wine and you have a great sense of well-being there. Everybody who goes loves them.

I think music is the real entertainment. I can't think of anything else really. Oh, they have boxing. I have not seen it, but they put a ring up there--apparently it's legal. It's about twenty feet square and they have seven or eight fights. Everybody sits around there smoking cigars and drinking, pretending they're at Madison Square Gardens. These people knock each other down and the referee is running around the ring and hauling them off by the ears.

But the Entertainment Committee does a good job. As I say, it's rather curious--they run from classical music to boxing.

Wine Committee Activities

Teiser: I understand that you have wine luncheons, too. That's not quite the same entertainment, but--.

McKeever: The wine luncheons are interesting. They take place in the cellar. The cellar was the original stables. In fact, under the floor I happen to know of the original bricks of the stables, red bricks. Leland Stanford had this building as his stables. His house, of course, is where the Stanford Court is. The cellar was just a dank, moldy place until just after the war when one of the managers figured out we might be able to make a room out of it. But it's still a sort of dank, cold room. There's a bar there on the floor. They have sliding partitions that can cut it off into smaller sections.

McKeever: People who go to the wine dinner are too numerous to fit into a smaller room. When you get a large room it gets very out of hand. Tables of eight and ten each. Wine doesn't taste the same when you're there to taste wine, not just to drink it down. The wine dinners are interesting. They have some good wines, but I think the Wine Committee seems to lose track.

We used to have a very good club wine where they would make a contract with a winery--you'd get to pick a good wine, and that would come with a University Club label on it. I was particularly glad with that because I could get a few cases of the white wine and the red wine. I've found that people who come to dinner frequently bring a bottle of wine and I like to have something to give back. When I gave them that, they didn't have the slightest idea what it costs, whereas with any other wine you can look it up and find out what it costs. [laughs] So I was very disappointed this Christmas when I found that they'd run out of labels. The Wine Committee had apparently goofed. It takes about six months to get another label. It has to go through some Washington bureaucracy in order to get okayed. The result was there was no club wine for sale.

I've been on many wine committees but just for tasting and deciding by vote which certain types of wine we preferred. When there's a consensus on that, they order maybe a hundred cases of this and that and so forth. That's in the wine cellar and they have a wine list to send to members. They don't do anything now except raise the prices. I don't know why because the Napa-Sonoma valley was just glutted with wine. There's no reason to raise the prices. They should be lowering them.

I find that's another thing. We have pretty good storage which is awfully important in my mind. It all gets stored in the cellar. There are wine racks all around it holding bottles.

### Spring Shambles

Jacobson: I understand that there was something called the Spring Shambles, an entertainment sort of extravaganza that was held annually in the early forties and then after the war?

McKeever: Yes, I remember one of them. It's a disgraceful thing, you see. One of the things that always bothered me is that a lot of people, particularly the younger people, confuse us with a fraternity house. Well, I've never belonged to a fraternity; I've never gone to undergraduate college in America. But I can see the difference. The Spring Shambles is too collegiate; it's not dignified at all. Speaking from my great age, everything now seems to be undignified.



McKeever: The Shambles was just a dirty show. They didn't have any girls there, I never saw any girls, but it was just a ribald, vulgar, rowdy, dirty show. Funny, sure. All those things can be funny at some angles and aspects. I'm not being puritanical about it at all. It's just a lot of people took a look at it and walked away after ten minutes or so. Which is the big test, I think, because they put a lot of work into it--rehearsals, costumes, props, and so forth. I haven't heard of one now for years. Have you heard of any one going on?

Jacobson: I haven't heard of anything except for the ones that were held just before the war and then just after it.

McKeever: Well, I went to one or two of them and they were not memorable. If you've got to do that, you should do it very professionally. It should be the very best. Nothing mediocre about it. I have a book somewhere in my library of Songs of the University Club. Have you seen it?

Jacobson: I have seen it.

McKeever: I don't ever remember singing any of them at all. I get the impression that it's sort of like the Bohemian Club which does everything to music. They might sit around singing songs in the Bohemian Grove, but I never heard anybody sing any songs here. We had some very clever people who wrote skits and plays.

#### Recollections of Leon Walker##

McKeever: Let's change the subject. When I was chairman of the House Committee the manager brought my attention to the fact that the roof on this building was sagging and said they thought it needed some repairs. I said, "Have you ever been up there?" He said, "No, you can't get up there at all." So I looked around. I see there is a ladder, but you have to go out four or five feet over the alley with a forty foot drop, and then get on the roof. There are a lot of buildings like that now.

So I went up there and I saw on the roof, just above where we are, an extraordinary pile of broken glass with grass growing in it. The broken glass had lots of water in it from the rain settling in parts of broken bottles. The rain was very heavy and the roof was obviously sagging, so I climbed down. (I remember I didn't like that climb at all. I have no head for heights, but somebody had to do it.) We got a crew up there and they got rid of all the broken glass. Sure enough the roof was coming down and they fixed it up.

McKeever: I wondered and wondered how that glass got on the roof. It was all in one spot about six feet square and about two feet high. Then one day I got the answer. One of our members, Leon Walker, lived next door in the building and he was an alcoholic. His father became a member of this club for one purpose only: so he could come in and take his son back. His son was about six feet five and the father was about six feet. He'd come in and grab him by the ear at the bar, drag him all the way down to the elevator, take him down, and bring him home. The guy'd say, "Ah, dad, lay off."

Leon was a Yale man who was a very good football player in his day, but he was an absolutely compulsive drinker. He'd get up here in the morning and drink only. In those days we had little chits from a cash register, and he'd say to anybody who came in, "Do you want to shake off some chits?" So you'd get the dice and you shook and either he paid for your drink or you'd pay for one of his. That was his whole day until he couldn't see at all; then he'd lurch home.

But I eventually found out what happened. I talked to him one day out there. I asked him how he got away with the booze; he had the top apartment next door. He said, "Oh, first of all, I would put a bottle under the curtains. I knew my father could find it. When they find it, they're happy." So I said, "Where do you keep the booze?" "I keep it in the toilet in the water tank," he said. "I've got about six bottles in there." Then I started to think about it and the proximity of the bathroom to the roof; he'd drink this and toss the bottle out on the roof when it was empty. [laughter] He'd been doing that two or three times a week for five years. You get a big pile of glass that way.

### Dice Games

Teiser: Could you describe the dice game you played in the bar?

McKeever: It's called Bull. It consists of two players, who each have a dice box and five dice. They both throw simultaneously and the one that has the higher hand (three of a kind will beat two pairs) is the boss. He can decide whether he will ask you to play on your hand, with the lesser hand, or tell you to pick it up. If he has two ones and two twos and you have a straight--three, four, five, six--he'll probably say, "Shoot," because the chances are he'll make either a one or a two on his next shot. Then he'll have a full house--three ones and two twos--or something like that. But you have nothing so you have to shoot better than that to beat him. That's the simple way.

McKeever: It's not as complicated as Liar's Dice. This is over very quickly and it's just called Bull. I see it's played a lot in bars downtown; sometimes we get into a bar there and they're playing a game that seems to go on forever. They must move the dice around, I don't know what it is. I once asked and they tried to explain it to me, but I couldn't follow it. The bartender gets into it, too. He apparently has numbers that he adds onto these other people. It's very mysterious.

Teiser: If you go into a bar and hear that bong, well, then you know they're playing.

McKeever: Oh, yes, the bong of the dice box. Slam of the dice box. Yes, those boxes have been there for years.

### Club Talent

Jacobson: You were mentioning something about Mr. Paramore that I think got lost when we switched the tape.

McKeever: Well, Paramore was a writer and an actor. He was a very witty fellow. He lived, I think, on this street and he used the club a good deal. He wrote the Shambles, which I won't say was all awful, but it was pretty low grade. But you see, nobody writes the whole thing and it being a sort of democracy, everybody feels they have to get some representation. I think he was too yielding in the wishes of his inferiors to get in the act.

The artist we have now is a dear friend of mine called Jack Stuppin. He's a man who took off on our club seriously fairly recently. He had a show here and a very good one, too. He has a picture in the dining room. It's odd for a club like this to have a picture by a member. It's at this end of the dining room, to the right of the fireplace. He was captain in the Marines, I guess, in the Korean War and then he was foreman of the grand jury at the age of thirty-two in San Francisco, which surprised me a great deal. He's got a brain for figures. He was at Merrill Lynch for a while, then he went to another firm, and I don't know where he is now. He's the wisest man I know about money. If I have problems with any former clients of mine, I usually call him and he'll tell me where to go. He is a really good artist. I have several pictures of his at home. But otherwise the club is notoriously lacking in talent. There's no music, no singing, no dancing. I can't think of any artistic talent at all. It's a club! [laughter]



Portraits of Club Bartenders

Jacobson: Now I understand that you sponsored the portrait of Mr. Hong.

McKeever: Oh, yes. I arranged for the artist, a Spaniard, by the name of Moya del Pino, to come up here. I said, "Well, Hong doesn't speak very good English." I said, "Frankly, nor do you." I said, "How did you get on?" He said, "Oh, we sort of worked out our lingua franca. He told me where to sit." It's a good picture. He was a very neat man. I also commissioned the picture of the next bartender on the other side that a man called Jerry Gooch did. It's a six-part picture of our bartender in a red coat mixing a martini.

One-and-a-Half Drinks: A Club Tradition

McKeever: The drink of this club is what they call a One-and-a-Half and that goes back to Prohibition, I guess. When Prohibition came in they sold drinks at the bar and a single was a little tiny glass that held about two ounces. The next one was a champagne glass that held about three times that. The double was, I think, forty cents for a martini and the single was twenty cents. Well, the single was too small and a double was too big. I think I had something to do with it. I worked on a glass that I thought was more suitable, which was a size partly between them. That's what it is now. It's a One-and-a-Half, they call it. They threw away those little glasses and kept the champagne glasses for champagne and now this One-and-a-Half sells for \$1.70, I think.

I remember when they put it in. People came up here with eyedroppers and pipettes and they measured the drinks to find out which was the better value: the forty-cents double, the fifteen-cents single, or the one-and-a-half at twenty cents. They found out that one and-a-half is the better value with a little more drink per cent. So they threw away the single and now everybody just uses one-and-a-half for a drink.

Teiser: How much vermouth does it hold?

McKeever: Just a whisper. It doesn't discolor the gin at all. [laughs] I'm sorry in a way because I like vermouth. It's considered very unfashionable to have a cocktail that even tastes of vermouth.

They used to have a One-and-a-Half Party every month where all the one-and-a-halves were free. I remember coming up on the cable car around five o'clock, hanging on the side, and a couple of yuppies said, "So why don't we go up here? It's a free party

McKeever: there at the University Club." They did. They came in and mingled with the crowd, got all the drinks they wanted, and went home. I mentioned that to the president and he was really angered by that. I said, "Well, it's simple. Get them to sign in." And now they do.

But those One-and-a-Half parties used to be terrible. They were scandalous because people would fall down the stairs. Their wives would call up and say, "What the hell have you done to my husband? He can't breathe."

The law has changed a good deal about that now. There is a responsibility. You can't ply anybody with drinks just because they ask for it.

Jacobson: I have one question about the One-and-a-Half parties. Do you know when they started and how the tradition got started?

McKeever: Must have been shortly after the one-and-a-half glass was established, which was sometime around '36, '37. I don't think it was a party when I first became a member. I think after the war in the forties, it was quite an event as the cable car group found, "There was a party going on there. Come on, it's free!" [laughs]

### Club Drinking Habits

Teiser: Did people used to drink more Manhattans, say, and Old Fashioneds?

McKeever: No, I don't think anyone's ever had a Manhattan in this club.

Teiser: I know they did during Prohibition.

McKeever: Yes, sure, because they had a better taste than that bathtub gin. I guess these maraschino cherries are hard to come by. No, I think people drink gin and wine. They have a table there right now that has a flacon of white wine sitting in ice for people that's free at the Round Table and a bottle of club wine, red wine, that you can sit and drink--you don't even pay for it. A lot of people like a glass of wine. They don't want a bottle. When you divide the cost of a glass of wine, it comes out such an odd figure that people say, "We'll just have the whole bottle," and hope more than one person works on it. I was here the other day with a guest and we knocked off a bottle of red wine and, well, we had a two-and-a-half-hour lunch.



McKeever: As far as the drinking habits are concerned, there's very little done. Once or twice I see somebody who gets some champagne, but very rarely. Almost always it's wine or one of the bar drinks: scotch and sodas, or shots of whiskey, rye. They don't distinguish the way bars do in the city what are called well drinks and call drinks. I've been trapped sometimes by that when I think I'd like a glass of Jack Daniels, and it's twice the cost of the ordinary bourbon. I remember once going to a bar and ordering Jack Daniels. The bartender said, "Don't order it. Just ask for a glass of whiskey." That was their well drink that day. "But if you name it, you'll have to pay more for it. [laughs] You're going to get it anyway."

### Dominos Tournaments

McKeever: Dominos is a pastime that is taken quite seriously here. On Tuesdays and Fridays at the end of this lounge room, there are probably twenty, thirty people sitting there playing dominos and a few playing bridge in the corner and a couple of backgammon tables. But dominos is a friendly game. They have a dominos tournament. In fact, for many years I've had the same partner.

It's a very jolly evening. The players bid on the teams, but the most I ever saw bid was sixty or seventy dollars. That's called Calcutta. If the bidder gets a good couple, he'll sell part of that to somebody else. This is not a gambling club at all. That's the biggest display of dollars you'll ever see here. When the auction starts off, they usually start at \$50. Well, you're playing with a partner, so that's \$25 each. If you're favored--somebody may come up to you and say, "I'll give you \$40 for half of your share"--you've got your money back pretty much there. It's not a money-making operation. No cunning operators can get in this house. The stakes are too low to make it worthwhile to be clever.

At the close of the evening was a large dinner; as I say, they charge quite a lot for the meal. I think the drinks are free. I don't know; it's sort of a dangerous thing to do in a club, but I think they've found by now that people just don't go crazy with a few drinks any more than I guess they do in cocktail parties. How long is it since you've seen everybody drunk after a party?

Jacobson: Quite a while.

McKeever: Yes, that's my impression, too. People are more interested in getting in and getting out than running in and lurching out.

Committees

Teiser: When you were chairman of the House Committee, was the library under the House Committee?

McKeever: Yes, it was then. They have a Library Committee now, but in those days, the House Committee had everything, including the food and the wine. The House Committee was much more active than the board of directors. The House Committee was not very big-- four or five people--and they got into everything. Made the manager's life hell. Right now there's a Library Committee and a Wine Committee. They have an Admissions Committee which lines people up for membership and gets somebody to introduce them and propose them and second them. Then there is the Membership Committee that throws them out. That's the way we keep our social balance.

Library

Teiser: Do you want to speak of the library?

McKeever: Yes. This collection has been accumulated for many years and there's a great deal of rare books, particularly on the subject of Californiana. We had a member here who used to drool when he saw those books. He said, "God, those are valuable books, but nobody reads them." I said, "Nobody uses them at all, no." A set of Henry Fielding is there with one book missing; somebody must have taken it and put it in his room to read it, then popped it in his suitcase and taken it away. Some of the books are rare and valuable, but little by little they are disappearing. I think the chief source of the disappearance is dead now, so maybe they'll stay here a little longer.

Discovery of the Audubon Prints

Jacobson: You were telling a story off tape about discovering the Audubon prints. Could you tell us that again so we can have it on tape?

McKeever: Well, I was in here with the manager looking for curtains for the library and when I pulled them aside, I noticed there was sort of a door behind the bookshelf. I opened it and it was full of cobwebs and mouse droppings and there was a big package back there. So I got one of the club's employees to pull it out, opened it, and it was a jumbo edition of the Audubon bird prints.

I looked at one or two of them and I thought they were really too precious to fool around with, so I wrapped it up again. The only person I knew who understood about those things in those days was a book seller in town. He took a look at it and he offered the club's director \$3,000 for it. The directors said, "Oh, gosh, certainly. Here, take it." They took it. When those prints were sold around town, they went for much higher. I know, for example, the Burlingame Club paid \$5,000 each for their two prints. I think the profit on that was unconscionable. Three thousand dollars was an awful lot of money in those days, but, my gosh, we had a gold mine. I guess there were fifty prints, worth at least \$20,000.

I remember I was very annoyed because the sort-of janitor-handyman--a dirty old man, always filthy--went in there and cleaned it up. I told him to do that. Then he came out and he said, "You know, I think you should give me \$50 for the work I did." I said, "You take it up with the manager. I can't understand why you want extra money for doing what you're supposed to do." "Well, there's a lot of money involved there," he said. I don't know what happened.

Jacobson: Well, I do have more questions that I want to ask you about your presidency and subsequent years in the fifties and sixties, but I think maybe now is a good time to stop. Would it be okay to meet with you again?

McKeever: Oh, sure.

Jacobson: Why don't we do that and we can pick up where we left off.

Post-War Restorations##

[Interview 2: 18 February 1987]

Jacobson: I wanted to go back to when you returned to the club after the war. I was wondering if the club did anything to welcome its members back from the war?

McKeever: No. The club, as I told you, was down to sixty-seven paying members, because anybody in the armed services was excused from dues and the club was in a terrible state. It was just another Powell Street bar. It was open to all officers of all services. It became a rather nice hangout, I'm told, from people who were here. I know one member, a dreadful young man who was a corporal--I don't know what branch of the service he was in, but he was stationed in San Francisco--and his great pleasure was to come up to the bar here. Whenever he saw a group of senior officers around the horseshoe bar there, he would go up to them and jostle them until one of them said, "Watch it, son." He would say, "Sir, are you a member of this club? I am." [laughter] Then he'd go home, having made his point.

But the club was in terrible disrepair. They had a series of managers who were absolutely unqualified and never put a penny into maintenance. The club was rundown, needed to be painted, and the carpets were all spoiled. The following years were really rehabilitation in the most primitive ways. The club's an old building. I know it's one of the few buildings built as a club. It had all sorts of mysterious wirings which have push buttons around the various public rooms. When we pressed the button, it rang and somebody would come. Well, the buttons are still there, but the wiring has all been eaten by rats and it doesn't work. It would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to rewire it, or so I'm told by the people who know more of these things.

I know we're going to have the 100th anniversary at the club in 1990. I think the club was originally on Powell Street down by Sutter. This was built on Leland Stanford's stables.

It was built very well indeed and the plans are all in City Hall. I went there and made copies of them to find out where the plumbing came from and went to, because nobody seems to keep any records. Plumbers come and plumbers go and they don't tell you what they do. They simply send the bill and then they're back again a week later.



Attracting New Members

Jacobson: How did the club go about increasing its membership when it was so low right after the war?

McKeever: I think the two or three hundred people who'd been in the services, many of whom were officers, just came and filled it up. They brought their friends and not everybody coming back from the services ran into business, as they had some well-earned rest and recreation coming. I think that's when they started mentioning the possibility that women might be members, or at least be allowed inside the club. That was worse than a monastery and, at that time, I think somebody allowed them in for private parties and luncheons.

Then, when they started to build more squash courts, that was the entering wedge for women because women play squash. It's a very handy game for women because all you need is a locker and a shower and a bat and a ball. The women played there with their husbands and they've even had women's tournaments here. They used to get some very good players from all over the world to give exhibitions.

Jacobson: Do you know if the club offered reduced membership fees after the Second World War to attract new members?

McKeever: I'm almost sure they didn't, but I could be wrong about that because I can't remember how soon after I got back from the Navy that I became an officer of the club. I think I served on some committees, but I don't remember any reduced fees.

I think the general idea was that people would come back just for the pleasure of joining and being able to come back. There's never been a drive of any sort. There's no bait that's being put out. It's almost all by friendship and largely by alumni at various colleges, because they want to get most of them from local colleges at California, Stanford, USF, and UCLA. The UC's an enormous college now; it has several hundred thousand students and not all in one place.

In answer to your question, I don't recall any drive except people would say, "Come on. Let's get some of your friends in here." People would go out. I know I got a few people. I would say, "Why don't you join?" They would say, "Why not?" I would say, "Come along for lunch and meet some other people. I'll put you up and someone will second you." They took quite a long time, a couple of months, before admitting anyone. They were very careful about it. They were fairly anti-Semitic in those days and also anti-Oriental after the war with Japan.



McKeever: I remember being thoroughly hornswoggled by a very dear friend of mine. He invited me to lunch and he says, "I'm going to bring a couple of friends." He came up to the dining room and he joined us on the third floor with two Japanese gentlemen. Well, the waiters refused to serve us. They knotted their napkins and were muttering to each other. The Japanese were not popular, is the point. I saw this friend of mine the other day—I still tease him about it. He still apologizes. [laughs] Says it was a dirty, dirty trick.

But that's the insularity. I don't know whether that's patriotism or jingoism, but all I know is that the Japanese were not welcomed. Now there are a couple of Japanese members and nobody worries about it at all.

### The Round Table

McKeever: There's a table on the fourth floor, a round table, that can be expanded by adding a longer table. It normally holds about eight, and with this round configuration you can get up to about twenty—all sitting really around the same table. They have the lunch and recently a couple of people have started the nice thing of providing free wine. There's a big ice bucket with a great pitcher of white wine sitting there cooling and several bottles of club red wine. It's not the best, but it's free and, of course, you meet a lot of interesting people. Members frequently bring friends who are considering joining the club.

### Business Connections and Dealings at the Club

McKeever: The last few times I've been there I've been a little depressed by the high level of Yuppie atmosphere. They talk computer language all the time. They talk about their presentations and flow-chart figurations. It's not very social and, to my mind, it's not very interesting business because I don't understand it. I don't think there's any direct selling at all. That's supposed to be one test of a non-residence club: whether anybody tries to sell anybody anything. I never heard of anything like that before. But I know that several members use lawyers that they met at the club and I think a couple of accountants do the taxes of half a dozen people I know. But it's very low key. I think primarily it's a social club; I hope so.

Jacobson: How regularly do members use the contacts they make at the club for business purposes?

McKeever: Well, not really at all. I recall once--I was practicing law--that I remembered talking to somebody at the table who obviously knew a great deal about an area of business that I wasn't particularly interested in. But then I had a client who was in that business. I racked my brains and I finally called around. I had to make about four calls until I found the people I remembered being at the luncheon with me. I got the man's name and I asked him to lunch up here and got the answers I wanted. I think that's about the only time I've ever used the club for a business contact. That was rather indirect, but it was successful.

Jacobson: Would you bring any clients or business associates as a guest, say, to play squash? Or for a private function at the club?

McKeever: No. The people you bring to the club are purely socially compatible. Of course, if I invite people with small businesses or with closed partnerships they'd bring their partners up. But they're clever not to talk shop. Because this day and age, shop is nearly indiscernible. People use words that nobody's ever heard before. Only two people understand it so it gets dirty looks from other people around there who are telling dirty stories and are not talking shop. It's very conspicuous.

It's not as pompously done, though, as the Bohemian Club, which, of course, is an enormous club and has in its membership anybody important from President Reagan on down. They have their Grove in the summer way up in the redwood country, which is their key encampment with five or six hundred servants. I think they have either houses or tents, and they invite people from all over the country and a lot from around here.

I have many friends who have been there. They say it's interesting. They put on a tremendous production, which is light opera and heavy opera under the redwood trees in the moonlight. It's very romantic. One man, a banker here who's a member--I had some business with him and he said, "I can't finish this because I'm going up to the Grove on Wednesday." But I dropped by the bank on Friday and he was there. I said, "I thought you were going up to the Grove." He said, "Well, I did go, but you know, Chauncey, I just can't stand the prospect of getting drunk twice a day. I don't mind once a day, but twice a day at my age is too much."

I think their motto is: "Weaving spiders come not here." You have to understand that no business is discussed at all. I remember seeing some news misprint in one of the local papers. They were talking about the Bohemian Grove parties. It said, "The motto of the club is 'Weaving spiders'--and there's a misprint--'come out here.'"

Jacobson: That's a wonderful typo.

You mentioned that at the last banquet you attended here you noticed a more yuppified atmosphere, where people were talking a lot more about computers and their presentations. Do you think that the atmosphere of the club has changed, where now there is slightly more of a business atmosphere than there was before?

McKeever: Well, I haven't said the club has changed. But I think the tradition of social conversation has changed, because I frequently have lunch downtown in some of the nicer restaurants there and it's worse there. You're only a few hundred yards from their offices. You might think they're the secretaries by the way they talk. Nothing, nothing, nothing, but shop. It doesn't bother me because I don't understand a word of it. I do notice that, but to a very much lesser extent here. The amenities aren't unobserved. They don't go into diagrams and formulas or anything like that; I haven't seen anybody pull out their computer.

Jacobson: Do you know how the tradition wherein no business papers could be brought into the dining area began?

McKeever: I remember seeing it enforced. I was up on the fourth floor. I used to spend a lot of time there, and people would come in with briefcases. That's all right. Some valuable paper you don't want to leave in the cloakroom; sometimes people will walk off with it. People always walk off with raincoats. You might as well give it away if you hang it up there on a rainy day. Anybody who hasn't got one just grabs the first one. I did lose one and got it back a month later. I was surprised a great deal. I just found it hanging there. I had my name in it. Most people don't bother to put names in coats anymore.

Anyway, I remember once going up to the bar and seeing three people around the round table there, and the floor was piled high with stacks of paper and files. I think it was in the evening and I was playing dominos with some of the older members. A real old member came up and said, "Just come and have a look at this." We went around the corner and there were three men sitting there really up to their knees in papers. It was all over the floor. He said, "This will never do, never do." So we called the manager and the manager talked to them. They quietly put the papers together in their briefcases, and left the club. I never saw them again. It was a dreadful exhibition. They did everything but pull a typewriter out. [laughs] I used to laugh, saying, "I can't hear you. The clicking of the briefcase clips is drowning your conversation."

Jacobson: Do you remember about when that was?

McKeever: I would say it was about ten years after the war.



Jacobson: And then people started being much more strict about not bringing in briefcases and papers?

McKeever: Oh, yes. They still are now. A dear friend of mine, Lawrence Tharp--he was a banker--asked me to lunch at the Bohemian Club. I said, "By the way, I have the most interesting letter from my sister in Switzerland." I pulled it out and started reading. "Put it away, put it away!" I said, "What do you mean? It's a pretty nice letter." "No, put it away. People will think we're talking business." So I put it away in marvel. But he really was scared. He put it on a postcard.

Jacobson: Did this tradition sort of happen simultaneously at all the clubs, or did it evolve on its own within each club?

McKeever: I think it's considered bad manners anyway, but it wasn't enforced anywhere as strictly as at the Bohemian Club. Of course, all these clubs have members in more than one club so that word got around, I guess. Some of the people in the Bohemian Club must have seen the briefcases around and mentioned it to other people. It may not have bothered many people very much; there wasn't a revolt. People don't take clubs very seriously. They're conveniences, not products. I suppose various people on committees concentrate on their work on their committee. But the average member, just as long as he gets in his poison, he says it's a pretty good club.

#### Presidency, 1951-52 and 1962-63

Jacobson: I want to return back to the fifties when you held some offices. You were vice-president in '49 and '50 and '51. Then you were president for a few years in the early fifties, and then again in the early sixties.

McKeever: It seems like more of the presidency than it should be.

Jacobson: Well, you were president from '51 to '52 and then, according to the membership listings, you were president again in '62 and in '63.

McKeever: Yes, I do recall that.

Jacobson: What during your first presidency in the fifties, needed your attention the most?

McKeever: Oh, just to keep the club from falling apart structurally and the fact there were no members. That seemed to have cured itself or gotten cured. It was rehabilitated somehow or other. I don't

McKeever: know why I was president the second time. I guess the selection committee just bent my ears. I said, "Well, come on, it's time to have somebody else. I've done my bit." They said, "Oh, no." So I said I would for one year and it pushed it into another year. I don't know if I was very good at it. I've seen much better managers than I was since then. I suppose at the time I was all right. I seemed to get all we wanted to do done, without hurting too many people's feelings.

### Troubles with the Unions

McKeever: We had a sort of series of very bad managers, and we had a bad time with the unions, too. As you might imagine, the average club member is a bit of a bourbon: they don't believe in organized labor and they're generous with tips. They don't like to be told what to pay for what. We were targeted by a particularly offensive president of the union. I remember sitting with him in the cellar for five hours. He had a piece of paper; his attitude was, "Sign, sign, sign." I just refused to sign. On the other hand, I wasn't going to have him say that I walked out on him. He finally had to give up and walk out. It was just an endurance contest.

The clubs were targeted because they represented basically a lot of wealthy people, and they wanted very much to get a toehold in there. We always paid good wages, sometimes more than the union required. But the union wanted their men in there, and they had a tough time anyway with the Oriental help. See, the Orientals don't like to be told what to do either. At one time, the whole staff was entirely Hong-tong. Then we suddenly switched to the Wong-tong. That was a mistake, because they signed up with everybody. But that's all right.

They used to have a box up around Christmas and members would sign a piece of paper, put a figure on it, and drop it into the box. That was the chance for their one contribution. Most people put in two or three hundred dollars. The union wanted all that, and they wanted it distributed in their own way. I can't think of what it was: whether they were afraid that their members might deduct it as a charitable contribution, or something on income tax. I don't think anybody ever did. But what I don't like now is that the money is spent by the union before they get it and they practically tell you what to raise.

I haven't been on the board for many years, but we used to get these almost impassioned pleas to contribute to the Christmas Fund, which anybody would do anyway. But there's this urgency



McKeever: that bothers me a bit because I know fundraising is a little name of America these days, but the fundraising for a Christmas gift is a little far off. It's not like it's imposed. It is a gift.

I suppose the argument is that if you ate your food in a restaurant you would pay 10-15 percent tip, so why don't you pay that to the fund. They actually have the nerve to send you your bill at the end of the year saying how much you've spent on food and drink. You find you've spent five or six hundred dollars on food and drink. Your request for subscription to the Christmas Fund seems to be based on what you would pay in a tip. I've never given high tips in restaurants; it depends on where you are and how the service is. The service is always good here so I guess they charge a good tip, maybe 15 to 30 percent. Twenty percent on \$2,000 is a hell of a lot in tips. And that's on top of their very high union scale. I know I sound like a scrooge, but sometimes I think that they're smaller in negotiating behind the services. But no problems.

Jacobson: So the Christmas Fund used to come out of each member's generosity and now it's become more or less obligatory.

McKeever: Yes, because the Christmas Fund was distributed by the manager. He knew people who worked hard, he knew what the salaries were, and he helped the ones that were good but low scale. Now they have a committee.

One year, I think I was very angry at the contract we'd signed. I remember I said, "Here's my Christmas contribution, but none of it is to go to people who are paid on the union scale," because I knew that included tips. I talked to one of the so-called trustees who was handling the fund. I said, "So what are you going to do about that?" He said, "Nothing." I said, "You are? I'm going to stop payment on the check." He said, "You are?" I said, "Sure. That money was given to you as a trustee. Trustees are supposed to carry out trusts, not to just make up their minds about what they're going to do with it." He said he'd take it up with the committee and he gave me back my money, which didn't bother me at all.

Jacobson: So now the union has enough control over how that Christmas Fund is distributed. It's not left to the manager's discretion?

McKeever: No, no.

But I must say that I have friends in the restaurant business and the guff they take from unions makes our problems seem non-existent because we've never had any trouble at all. Nobody's ever threatened to quit or go up to the union, because we knew what was wrong. Now we have a very good manager and he senses these things before they come to a head: enormous

McKeever: personality conflicts and things like that among the help. But that was always a problem because we had an utterly incompetent manager who would just make things worse.

Jacobson: Have the problems with the union been recurring or was there mainly one problem during one period of time that then resolved itself?

McKeever: There was a problem two or three years ago. I knew one of the directors and he told me that the board of directors was seriously considering taking a strike because the union can't picket on property. We have this back alley and we would keep that back alley open for deliveries and supplies. And if the union truck drivers wouldn't come in, fine. They'd unload on the sidewalk, and we'd bring in our own people.

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I was curious to see how it would all work out, but they capitulated; I think they knew they'd lose it. That was the worst thing that could happen to a union: to go on strike for six weeks, two months, particularly in the rainy weather. I have a client who had a restaurant, and his restaurant served special foods. It was Indian only. All his help came from the Indian students at the University of California. The unions wanted their frycooks and hashslingers to work for him. He said, "I can't hire them." "You'd better hire them. You've got to hire union men." But he took it so lightly: they were outside picketing and when it rained he put up umbrellas, and he had a little stand there with hot coffee for them. The strike didn't last very long. It's very hard to keep chanting, "Unfair, unfair," when you're getting free coffee under an umbrella.

#### Problems with Club Managers

Jacobson: What other problems or projects were you involved in when you were president?

McKeever: Well, there were no real serious problems. As I say, the managers were not good. One was very venal. I remember bringing my car down the alley one evening with the headlights on, and out of the back door came the manager with a great big bundle under his coat. I stopped the car and got out and said, "How are you this evening?" He said, "Fine, Mr. McKeever." I said, "What have you got under your coat there?" He said, "That's for me to know and you to find out," and he ran. I found out later it was a twelve-pound ham; he was taking it home for his family.

Jacobson: How long did he last with the club?

McKeever: That was the end of that. Of course, you've got to be careful. You can't accuse him of stealing. It's awful. There again frequently we did get calls from people who were considering hiring managers that we'd fired. I learned to be extremely cautious. Word gets around: if you can't say something good, you say nothing. They know what that means. You don't want to be sued for libel or unfair labor practices, blacklisting. You just say, "Oh, I don't know, I just can't remember. I know I couldn't possibly think of anything against him. No, no."

But I can't remember any particular problems. I'd forgotten I was president so many times. They must have run out of talent.

Jacobson: Why do you think the club has so many problems with the managers?

McKeever: Well, it should be comparable to a job in a small hotel, but the fact that the hotel is always full of the same people makes it different. The opportunities of the manager are much greater than those of the managers of a small hotel. You couldn't walk in the kitchen and come out with a twelve-pound ham and expect to get away with it. I think the manager is in a position to terrorize the help, which I don't think you could do in a small hotel. We are unionized to some extent but it's to a very mild extent. I don't think anybody could steal anything without having word come out. But I think there was some lack of security.

Most of the people in the club and in their own business aren't always on the lookout for crime. They consider the club as an extension of their own home. If you've got a crooked maid or chauffeur, it's your problem, but you don't go around suspecting it. I think that's the answer, if there is an answer. People just relax because they don't expect to be cheated, stolen from. It's the easiest thing in the world to steal. Just go up to the bars, when nobody's in there, take a bottle, put it in your pocket, and walk out. When they take inventory at the end of the month, they'll find a few bottles unaccounted for. They don't count up the empties, just made a mistake.

Jacobson: How much of the help is unionized? Who among the staff?

McKeever: I don't know because it's changed since I had anything to do with these things. I think all the waiters, cooks and chefs, and the bartenders are on the union payroll, but I don't think the others are. We don't have elevator boys. I think it's just the culinary staff. I will say the standards are good. If you get a bad meal they usually manage to get rid of somebody in the kitchen because the unions, in all fairness, do try to keep up their end of the bargain, which is providing adequate help. They charge



McKeever: for it because it's enormous, but if you can demonstrate a guy isn't worth it, then they'll very gladly get rid of him because they don't want their reputation to go. It's probably a good balance of interests. Of course, the injury on this side is sheer inertia. It's got to be terrific before anybody notices it. [laughs]

### Lecture Series

Jacobson: What about the club's involvement with the community: I understand that the club has been host to distinguished scholars and guests of sorts?

McKeever: Well, not in the way that the Bohemian Club does. The rich and the great from all over the world fly into their encampment. But here we have a whole series of addresses and lectures by most distinguished people: writers, painters, politicians. They're not politicians--statesmen, ex-ambassadors and things like that. One of our members was the United States Ambassador to Kabul. He got out there a week before the Russians arrived. His father's also a member; I'm playing dominos with him tonight--Eliot.

Jacobson: Is that Theodore Eliot?

McKeever: Yes, Theodore Lyman Eliot and the other one is Theodore L. Eliot, III. They don't call each other senior and junior.

### Political Leanings of Club Members

Jacobson: What about any political involvements? Is the club ever--?

McKeever: No, it's at an absolute minimum. Sometimes the Round Table will get more varied comments and gossips and things. There's a little talk about city politics in a rather derogatory way--you know, the parking situation--and almost always while we're there, the police cars are screaming by and usually they say, "The mayor's going out to lunch." They do. Willie Brown is no friend of the fourth floor at all.

Jacobson: Would you say there's some uniformity of political beliefs among the members?

McKeever: It varies in bigotry. We have our favorite bigot who will tell stories that will curl your hair. [laughs] You laugh so much about it, it's hard to hear. He's a dear soul so you'll like him

McKeever: very much indeed. When he's got on his thinkers, you laugh so much you have to practically write it down. Oh, what stories! I don't know where he gets them. He lives in Piedmont so that's not a very liberal background, I guess.

### Club Usage

Jacobson: Another thing I wanted to ask you about was the attendance patterns. I want to get a sense of how much time you spend at the club, how often you come in.

McKeever: For the last several years, I've always been here on Tuesdays to play dominos. There's a group of about six people and at least four show up. If more show up, they cut in at the end of the game. That's a friendly game over there. We're getting so old. Most of us are over eighty, I think. I'm seventy-nine. They put the flag at half-mast when you die. Just the club flag, not the national flag. They used to do that until it was pointed out that only the president can order the flag flown at half-mast. Sitting in the club we used to laugh and say, "That flag is nailed at half-mast because the average age of a club member is eighty-five or so.

What's on tonight is a dominos tournament. The place will be packed. They're allowed to bring guests and my partner was very nervous about that because there's another club in town which is known as the Sewer Club. It's in the basement of a building on California and Montgomery.

Jacobson: It's not a very attractive name.

McKeever: It has a more dignified name, the Financial Center Club, but it's always been known as the Sewer Club, because it's down below. The people who belong to it are the biggest cheats. [laughs] I've never seen a fistfight, but there probably will be one tonight. They make the rules up as they go along, so-called international rules, if there is such a thing. So before you play in this tournament, you have to be very, very clear on what you're doing.

I lost the tournament with my friend, Ted Eliot, last year because a team of Sewer Rats wouldn't let Ted play the last domino. The theory generally is the last domino of a hand plays itself. If you've got an out, you can show it and move it around until there's an advantage, a bigger score. Ted had a score, turned it up, and started to look around when they all grabbed up the dominos and started to play the next game. I said I objected to that. "Oh, no, no, no, no," I said. "The last domino always



McKeever: plays itself." "What rules are those?" I said, "I've been playing dominos here for forty years, and the rule says that the game is over when the last domino is turned up and it doesn't play anymore." "Oh, that's international." [laughter] The team that beat us was playing international. I always laugh now when I say, "Last domino plays itself, remember." Ted says, "I remember."

Jacobson: Well, now I know what to say when I'm losing a game. I'll change the rules and call it international.

In an average week, how many times would you come to the club and what would you do? Let's say, when you were working full time.

McKeever: My office was down the hill and I would come here probably three nights a week for a drink before I went home and maybe a couple of lunches: one by myself and the other with somebody. You usually get a little tired of that round table group and very often when I brought somebody we joined the group. I did that when somebody was likely to be compatible. I think that would be about average. There were other occasions. I remember when I came three or four days in a row. It's basically a lunch club.

The dinner's a bore because there's no place to park around here at all. This alley fills up. Some people park there all day. It's awfully hard to police. You have to hire a man; we did try that for a while, but it was so expensive. It's ten dollars for two hours across the street. The Brocklebank, which is at the top of Sacramento Street, has a deal with us where for half price you park the car there and you get a ticket; you get it validated here and you get your car out for two or three dollars. It's very nice. It's a bit of a long walk up the hill, though, after dinner.

The dining room, like at all the clubs, loses money. They have awfully good food, but it's very difficult to make money because you don't know how many are coming. It might be forty for lunch or three. The food has got to be fairly flexible although the chef has got to be a bit of a genius. It's almost considered standard to call up and say you're bringing a party of four and six for dinner. In the first place, they have it all ready for you, and in the second place, the chef will break out the corned beef hash or serve you a huge feast.

Jacobson: You mentioned that for a while you were coming regularly during your lunch hour to play squash. Was that a part of your regular routine or did that just last a short period of time?

McKeever: Before the war I was so full of energy I used to run up the hill from the Russ building, where I used to work, and by arrangement play two or three games of squash. I'm not sure whether we'd play fifteen points or twenty-one points, but it was always enough to get you going and hot and exhausted. Then you'd take a shower and get a glass of beer and a sandwich sent down to the squash court while you were dressing. I would walk slowly down back to the office. That was when I was young and had a lot of energy. I remember I always used to run up the hill; that was a dumb thing to do.

Jacobson: Would you meet club members first here for a squash game or would you bring a guest?

McKeever: Oh, no. I'd call somebody and say, "Will you play squash?" I don't think I ever remember being disappointed. People always turned up. I think there's a little sense of honor about that. If somebody has asked you to play a game, it's not like "Come in and have a drink," or something like that. There's a little duty involved, wouldn't you say? As I say, I've never been disappointed.

#### Admissions Policies and Procedures

Jacobson: What characteristics make for a valuable club member?

McKeever: For appointing you to the club? Or once you're a member?

Jacobson: Well, both.

McKeever: From the point of view of the club, they would like the background to be clearly standard as a graduate from a recognized university or college. There, again, we have exceptions. One of the best members never finished college for various reasons. Some of the colleges you couldn't find in a directory. But the real qualification is that they're accepted by the Admissions Committee and half the time by the board of directors. They do a very thorough job, indeed. Both the sponsor, who is responsible for their enrollment, and the seconder appear before the board of directors separately and are questioned about their nominee. If the questions are embarrassing they have to answer them anyway. But I would say the turndown rate is not very great. Somebody who's been on that Admissions Committee for years said, "Well, one in ten is turned down." So they pick them rather carefully.

Jacobson: Why would somebody be turned down?

McKeever: Well, frankly for personal reasons. I remember somebody was turned down for membership because he was considered to be a raging homosexual and, in those days, that was considered undesirable. Another one was turned down because he was having an affair with one of the members of the committee. [laughter] I told the sponsor it was going to happen; he didn't believe me.

Jacobson: You mentioned that the process for evaluating the prospective members is very thorough. What do they go through, what do they look at?

McKeever: It's not a questionnaire; it's a matter of judgment. They talk to people who know him and they ask those people many intimate questions. If you can't answer them, they try to find out somewhere else. It's not a third degree; a man's reputation has a lot to do with it, too. If he's known as a pretty good sort, he doesn't get a microscopic test.

I think the standards are pretty good. The object of the exercise is to have a judgments club, sort of. I think it was a British foreign secretary who said, "Gentleman don't read other gentlemen's letters." One of the English statesmen said that about electronic snooping.

Jacobson: Is there a reference check with people other than the sponsor and the seconder?

McKeever: Oh, yes. You write down the names of other members who know the man. I remember nominating this man who was married to a Japanese lady. He was a wonderful man--he came here, I think, from Chicago--and he wanted to be a member of the club. He'd been up here several times as my guest and everybody liked him enormously. I was talking about him to one of the members of the Admissions Committee. He said, "Well, tell me, Chauncey, have you ever had him in your house for dinner?" I said, "No, but I'd like to." He said, "Well, why don't you do it?" He brought his wife over and she was Japanese. She was absolutely charming. So when I appeared before the committee, I said rather pointedly he and his beautiful wife had dined in my home and were very good company indeed. It sort of forestalled the question because I think if they said, "What sort of wife has he got?"--which is a very important thing--it may have given them a little shock to find out she was Japanese.

Jacobson: Do you think that may have been an issue with the Admissions Committee?

McKeever: It was, yes.



Club Wives

McKeever: More and more, the club membership has been aware of the rising power and influence of women. The closest women to the members are their wives and some of them are real troublemakers. The women who play the squash, of course, have more muscular power than most and they are very annoying, indeed. They practically own this building. It's got an enormous steamroom, men's showers, lady's showers, locker rooms, and four squash courts. The women are there on all the weekends, the women play there and bring their children. They have a squash pro who gives them lessons.

My wife and I--we live up on the hill--came down one day to watch two world champion squash players--both Indians--in an exhibition game. We walked down the hill, got in there, and a tough woman said, "Who are you? What do you want?" I said, "Well, I'm a member of the club." "Show your membership card." I said, "I don't have a membership card. I've been a member here for about thirty, forty years." I said, "Who are you?" "Well, I'm Mrs. So-and-So." I said, "What are you doing here?" "I'm running this." I said, "Well, run it. Don't get in my way." She said, "Stand over there." I said, "I will not stand over there at all. I resent this very much, indeed." She didn't have a squash racquet in her hand; otherwise, I would venture she would have hit me with it. I'm sure there are very nice ones, too, but the muscular women scare me.

Jacobson: Have there been other cases where wives have exerted influence over the club, aside from the squash court?

McKeever: I see what you mean, but I really don't know the details of it.

Years ago--forty years or so--I heard of a woman in town. I guess she'd had an affair with this young man, and she had blood in her eye. She kept him out of the Burlingame Club, somehow or other, and also out of the Pacific Union Club. The Burlingame Club is men and women; the Pacific Union Club is just men. I don't know how she did it, but I guess hell hath no fury like a woman scorned. She went to work and she accomplished her objective. I don't know if he ever applied here, and I don't know what would have happened. Women can, when they get exercised, stir up a lot of trouble.

Admission of Women

Jacobson: Has there ever been a push to admit women to this club?

McKeever: Oh, it comes up all the time. We've gone about as far as anybody wants. I don't think anybody wants to open the club anymore, frankly. My daughter comes in here often when she's in from Boston; they either sleep here or at home. When they're here, they get their breakfast here and can have lunch upstairs, and dinner, if they want to. But they might just as well be members of the club. They have full use of the club as guests. Their membership would just be symbolic. They would have some say in the running of the club; they would have one vote out of five hundred to elect a director.

I think it's a moral matter, it's economical or really social. I think it's fairly natural for members to stick together. It was hard enough in World War II to find a female sergeant in a tough regiment. They all were very good--you'd have to be terribly good to get anywhere as a woman in the armed services. Twice as good as a man. I think that's true now of the Naval Academy and West Point. The women they have there are super people.

Jacobson: What are the principle objections to admitting women more than they already are admitted as guests of the club?

McKeever: I think everybody automatically thinks of the worst possible situation where you get a woman who won't stop talking and will not take no for an answer and, worst of all, bursts into tears. I guess that's the worst that you can possibly dream up. Of course, there are other times when a woman could be very helpful to you. They have an eye for color and furniture and taste and so forth and maybe know more about cooking than most men. But I think the general idea is that they're different. That's all, and, as you get older, you can't stand change.

Jacobson: Are there members who want women to join as members?

McKeever: I never heard of one. I've never heard people really thump the table and say, "Over my dead body!" But I've never heard anybody say, "Why don't we have women?" I guess they're afraid to; somebody might hit them on the head with a beer bottle.



Changes in Club Membership, Functions, and Activities

Jacobson: I was wondering if you could summarize what some of the major changes have been, since you joined the club, in the club's functions, activities, and membership?

McKeever: There must have been changes, but they've come so slowly that they seem more like developments than changes. The cost of everything has gone up enormously. Although the service hasn't changed one little bit, nor the food and drink. Although the membership is changing all the time, it's kept very much at the same high standards as what you had forty or fifty years ago when I joined. You can talk easily with any member of the club without any fear of offending personal feelings or expecting any gaucherie. It's a comfortable place. I don't see any changes at all. Nor will there be any.

All you need is a good manager and a good accountant. The board of directors comes and goes. They serve for one or two years and so does the president. They are almost anonymous officers. Very few people know who the president is. They're taken for granted. This particular president puts out a lot of paperwork. He's very busy.

Jacobson: Do you think the individual members' reasons for joining the club may have changed over time at all?

McKeever: I would say not. One of the things we had to look out for years and years ago was people mistaking us for a fraternity house. They behaved in more of a fraternity house manner than was agreeable. Now this doesn't occur at all; I think the war had a lot to do with it, too. They come from college so much more mature than they used to be. They settle down to a life of genteel respectability.

Jacobson: Are there any other changes from how the club was when you first joined in 1936?

McKeever: Well, not very much. The structure, of course, is the same. The type of membership is the same. The activities have calmed down a great deal. The interior is ten times better than it was. Each one of these bedrooms has a bathroom, and they have suites. This was all storage room before. I don't know what they did with it. Now they're going to clean up the cellar and put another night club in there.

Jacobson: Oh, really?

McKeever: I don't know. The back of the cellar is falling apart because of termites.

Corporate Sponsored Membership

Jacobson: What about corporate sponsorship of memberships. Has that been a newer thing or--?

McKeever: Well, it's a nasty thing. It's a snake, because as a practicing lawyer myself, I deducted any expenses that involved my business; when I had people to lunch, I had to select them very carefully. I've been audited by the IRS, but they've never challenged me at all. I keep the bills that I pay for my tax returns in case they ask. But the corporate sponsorships have been terribly abused. Corporations frequently do pay members' admission fees or their dues.

Today's newspaper said that any club with more than four hundred members, that served hot meals and permitted corporations to pay expenses and dues, could no longer be tax-exempt; it would be a profit institution. It's depressing because this happens more and more to people who have just one form of significant success in the Yuppie world. I'm told an awful lot of bills are paid by corporation checks. It's just a wayward state.

I felt like suggesting to the officers to put the word around but not in writing, call on them one by one and say, "Get the corporation to give you a check. Put it in your account and pay us with your personal check." That might save some trouble, but it's too late now. If we'd done this a year or two ago, and we can honestly say that we haven't had a corporate check for two years, I think they would have said, "Okay, you're clean." The 400 membership limit is a little difficult because we're 475 right now, trying to get to 500. We also serve meals here.

Jacobson: Of course, it's not just that those factors make the club tax-exempt; but when the club is no longer thought of as "distinctly private," it might no longer be possible to disallow admitting women, for example.

McKeever: Well, I haven't had time to think about that. The whole definition of a club is to keep people out. I suppose under four hundred is a good figure. The IRS, of course, doesn't do anything anymore except look for money. They can call the club a profit institution; they're not permitted to call it a business, because it isn't. All you can do is lower the membership and take a loss on dues revenue. I don't know, I don't think anyone's thought this one out very thoroughly.

We're talking about something we heard this morning, anyway. I hadn't heard at which club two of the members were apparently not to pay their bills with corporate checks. It was suggested

McKeever: to them personally and privately that they get their expenses they wish to charge to the corporation, and pay for them with a personal check. They should have done that some time ago.

Jacobson: How long have there been corporate sponsored memberships? Does that date back several years or is this a more recent phenomenon?

McKeever: I think it's much more recent. I would say only within the last ten years. Before that, I'd never heard of it. When I was president, on occasion I would go and look through the books and check things, just snooping around. I noticed all the checks--all personal checks. Several of them would bounce with great regularity. [laughs] That's something you can't do with a corporate check.

#### Club's Value to Its Members

Jacobson: What would you say makes the club valuable to its members?

McKeever: A sense of cohesion. It's a place where you can find like-minded people, which isn't very easy to do in anything. And enough rowdy to be stimulating.

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Jacobson: You were telling me why the club is valuable to you.

McKeever: I'm speaking as a member. It's a friendly place. I know how friendly clubs are. There's an Oxford joke about a man who said that at Oxford people were such snobs, they hardly spoke to anybody. Someone responded, "That's a lot of nonsense. I rowed in the Oxford Eight and I knew practically everybody in the boat except for a couple of fellows up in the bow." I think that's rather true here. Nobody knows all the members. But the more you come here, the more you meet them. Particularly at that Round Table where they serve you free wine and encourage you to bring your friends.

You don't at all feel that you have to press for these people's background. We've talked about that already. In business, time and again, I've been very attached to somebody who's a fascinating person. I found that when I dug further, all was not as it seemed at all. I could kick myself for being so unobservant.

A very dear friend died of a cocaine overdose fairly recently in the last two or three years. He and I worked together very well. He had married for the second time and he

McKeever: had children. He was an extraordinarily learned fellow, a vivacious person, and a very good lawyer. He brought, to my mind, an unusual attitude to world problems; he was able to solve them very quickly by fairly unorthodox reasoning. One day he woke up dead. I finally got the autopsy report: he was full of cocaine. We never knew it. He had lots of money. I mean, he made a lot of money and it was the biggest shock in the world. I took days to recover because I felt, "I am so stupid. I have seen this man four times a week, have stayed with him in the country. It never occurred to me that--I never saw him snort anything illegal."

He was absolutely finished. He was very animated, but that was the way he was when I first met him. I never knew him until about three or four years later. We'd have lunch with each other two or three times a week. He joined this club. He had his wedding reception here. The way he died, I just don't know people.

So when you ask what the club is for, it's to get to know people, of being among familiar things and familiar people, familiar food. That's about it. Coziness. Shabby gentility. Leather chairs. A good brass rail on the bar.

Jacobson: Thank you very much for this interview.

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Theodore L. Eliot

The University Club of San Francisco:  
One Hundred Years of Tradition and Change

An Interview Conducted by  
Lisa Jacobson  
in 1987



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## THEODORE L. ELIOT

Born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1903, Theodore L. Eliot graduated from Harvard University in 1925. He worked in transportation and financial fields until World War II, when he became a captain in the Naval Transportation Service. Moving to California in 1946, he held positions in steamship companies before becoming executive director and president of the San Francisco Art Institute for eleven years. He joined the University Club in 1949 and served as president in 1959-1960.



BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name THEODORE LYMAN ELIOT  
Date of birth 4-4-03 Birthplace CAMBRIDGE, MASS  
Father's full name SAMUEL ATKINS ELIOT  
Occupation UNITARIAN MINISTER  
PRESIDENT AM. UNITARIAN ASSOC Birthplace CAMBRIDGE, MASS  
Mother's full name FRANCES HOPKINSON ELIOT  
Occupation MOTHER Birthplace CAMBRIDGE, MASS  
Your spouse MARTHA BIGELOW ELIOT  
Your children JOAN ELIOT Sappington, THEODORE LYMAN ELIOT JR.,  
Gwladys ELIOT Scott, MARY ELIOT HAGERUP  
Where did you grow up? CAMBRIDGE, MASS, Northeast Harbor MAINE (SW)  
Present community BELVEDERE, MARIN Co, CALIF  
Education HACKLEY School, TARRYTOWN, N.Y. HARVARD College, BA  
STEAMSHIP PASSENGER SERVICES -  
Occupation(s) TRAVEL AGENCY - WALL ST. INVESTMENTS  
Exec Director / PRESIDENT SAN FRANCISCO ART INSTITUTE  
Areas of expertise SINCE my retirement in 1974 all of the above  
occupations have been through so much change that I am  
no longer an expert in any of them.  
Other interests or activities Ornithology since 11 years old  
- gardening - family investments - children, grand children  
and great grandchildren - maintaining friendships  
Organizations in which you are active None - I leave it to the next  
generations.



I THEODORE L. ELIOT

[Interview 1: 28 April 1987]##

### Education

Jacobson: What I'd like to start with, before we launch into your joining the University Club, is a little bit of background on yourself. Maybe you could just briefly tell me a little bit about when you were born, your education, and the beginnings of your professional career before you moved out to San Francisco.

Eliot: Very quickly, I was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on April 4, 1903, and grew up in Cambridge until I was sixteen or seventeen when I went to Hackley School in Tarrytown, New York. Then to Harvard. I fell in love with my present wife when I was a sophomore, and speeded up my courses so that I could get out quick-as-a-wink. Got through in three and a half years. Graduated with the class of 1925.

### Professional Life

Eliot: I always wanted to be in the steamship business. We got married and I went to New York. I went to work for the International Mercantile Marine Company, which was a J. P. Morgan holding company. The companies that he held in I. M. M. were the White Star Line, which is British; the Red Star Line, which is British; Atlantic Transport, which was both British and American; Panama Pacific Line, an American line which ran to California; and the Leyland Line, which was British. I went into the passenger department.

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## This symbol indicates that a tape or segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes, see pages 276-77.



Eliot: Then along in 1928, my friends on Wall Street seemed to be doing much better than I was so I left the shipping business and went to a brokerage house just in time for the crash of '29. We specialized in chain store securities. Overnight we suddenly became expert managers of failing chain stores. We had a contract to try to resuscitate a big chain in Montreal. I went up there for two weeks, but it lasted about a year. I came back but I didn't like the business anymore. I started a travel company in Boston. This was about 1933. I ran that until the war.

Jacobson: That must have been a difficult time to start a travel business.

Eliot: The thirties weren't too bad. People were traveling. It was mostly by ship. People weren't flying very much. They were domestically, but overseas they weren't. They were still taking ships. Most of them went to and from Europe by ship.

And then during the war, I was lucky enough to be a round peg in a round hole. I got myself a job with the Naval Transportation Service in Washington. There I first started out handling cargo to meet the logistics for the airbases we were building in Iceland, but I shortly went back to my old love, the passenger business, when I became involved with Navy transports and their routing to the various combat zones.

After the war, I decided that Europe was flat and the future of shipping was going to be in the Pacific. I was correct but my timing was all wrong. I didn't count on George Marshall resuscitating Europe or on Mao taking over China. Today has proved me right. Today our transpacific shipping is bigger than the transatlantic.

I came to San Francisco and worked for American President Lines in the passenger department for nine years and then for Matson Lines for seven. By that time the jets were in and they'd make Hawaii in four and a half hours and the Lurline and the Matsonia would take four and a half days. So the writing was on the wall.

I didn't know what I wanted to do. I pounded the sidewalk thinking, "What will I do?" I met Mr. McKeever on Montgomery Street, and he said, "Don't take any of those jobs you are telling me about. We need you at the Art Institute."

Jacobson: Was this Chauncey McKeever of the University Club?

Eliot: It was Chauncey. I said, "What's the Art Institute?" He said, "You know, it's that art school on Russian Hill." And I said, "I've never heard of it." He said, "Yes, you have. It's that tiled old building with the campanile on Chestnut Street above



Theodore L. Eliot, left, and Chauncey McKeever, right. The occasion was the presentation of an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts to Mr. Eliot at the San Francisco Art Institute.



Eliot: Bimbo's night club." I said, "Above Bimbo's night club? I don't remember it." "Yes," he says, "it's just up the street." And I said, "Oh, I think I do remember it. Marty and I went to a party there. It must have been in the late forties. One of the drunkennest occasions I've ever been to in all my life." He said, "That's the place."

So for the next eleven years I ran the Art Institute. Then I retired in '74.

## II THE UNIVERSITY CLUB

First Acquaintance with the Club

Jacobson: How did you find out about the University Club when you came to San Francisco?

Eliot: When I first came here I knew almost nobody, but I did have a cousin who married a member of the club named Lloyd Means. I didn't have a place to stay except a hotel, and Lloyd put me up at the club as a guest for maybe two weeks until I found a house to rent in Mill Valley. That was my first knowledge of the club. I enjoyed it. It wasn't until a few years later, '49, that I joined the club. I think Lloyd Means sponsored me.

Jacobson: Between the time you first stayed as a guest and the time you joined, did you pop in as a guest for lunch?

Eliot: I don't recall doing that very much. I was very busy and living in Marin, commuting.

Reasons for Joining

Jacobson: What made you decide to join the club in '49?

Eliot: Oh, because I enjoyed that first stay. I liked it. By that time I'd found some other people who belonged to the club whom I liked. It seemed to be rather fun, number one. Number two, American President Lines was kind enough to say they'd like me to belong and would put up the admissions fee and the monthly dues, and would pay any expenses that I might have whenever I used the club for business. So I thought that was a good deal.



Jacobson: Certainly sounds like it. How had you met up with people who were members of the club before actually joining? Were these business associates?

Eliot: Well, I already had known some. It didn't take me very long to get to know others.

Jacobson: How had you known these other people? What was the connection?

Eliot: I don't recall exactly, but I think just in my daily business--and socially--I met members who belonged. As my wife and I made friends, several turned out to be University Club members. But I used the club in the early years almost entirely for American President Lines' business.

### Entertaining Business Guests

Eliot: I don't think I was always too popular because my guests were very apt to be Japanese and war memories had not faded. We were building up a pretty good passenger business with Japan. We already had good business with Manila for the Filipinos and Hong Kong for the Chinese. In those early days we also were carrying a lot of missionaries out of San Francisco to China. Then when Mao came along we turned around and brought them all back.

I say I don't think I was too popular for entertaining Japanese at that time. I don't think the members minded too much, but I think the staff did because the staff then, as well as now, are mostly Chinese and Filipinos, and they had not much love immediately after the war for the Japanese.

Jacobson: Would they say anything to you?

Eliot: No, I just felt it. Then later, the vice president of the Philippines--and I can't remember his name--was going to pay a visit to San Francisco, and Mr. George Killion, who was president of American President Lines, wanted to entertain this man. So he said, "I want to put on a big party. Can the University Club do it right?" And I said, "Yes, we'll see that it's done right." And he said, "I want it right. And you're in charge. You do it."

So I had flowers for the ladies and carnations for the men. I went to the club manager and we plotted out a menu. We took over the whole fourth floor for cocktails and the third floor for the dinner. At the dinner, there must have been near a hundred people in a great huge, long, U-shaped table, with the head table

Eliot: section by the fireplace. I said to the manager, "How many waiters are you going to have?" So he told me. I said, "That's not enough. I want one for every two people."

And going over the menu, "I want that crab or shrimp cocktail, whatever it is, in a little glass in a bed of ice in a silver goblet." [laughter]

I didn't know if I'd get fired for all this by A.P.L., but I really put it on. Then we got the singers from the Bohemian Club. They had a quartet. One of them played the piano. They were great singers. I'd heard them. So they came, and they were mixed in with the guests. During the change of courses, they'd get up and sing. It was a great party. So I think I pleased the boss. The help were impressed and liked this party. In fact, I could do no wrong for a while after that. [laughter]

Jacobson: Did the club have to hire more waiters for this particular occasion?

Eliot: Just part-time, yes.

#### Use of Club by Outside Groups

Jacobson: How amenable is the club in general to having parties for other groups aside from University Club members?

Eliot: I think parties helped to cover the cost of building those two wine cellar rooms downstairs. We changed the layout of the club; took some bedrooms and built that Cable Car Room. That's been very useful, too.

Jacobson: What kind of groups has the University Club entertained in those rooms?

Eliot: Oh, I don't know that I am in a position to tell you. There must be some records down there, but I know local clubs like the Chit Chat Club used to meet there. It was a men's group with literary interests. There were other groups too which met there. But remember they always had to have a member of the club present. That's been the policy. A member can't say, "I want X, Y, Z, a party of twenty," and let someone else handle it. You have to be there. It's your party. It's your membership, you're responsible for it. But there's a lot of those that go on all the time.

Jacobson: Did you have to pay any extra fees to University Club for a non-University Club function?

Eliot: They usually had a room charge that covered all that kind of stuff. In other words, if you wanted to set up the Cable Car Room or one of the downstairs rooms or to use even the dining room or part of it, they'd have you pay a room charge and that covered the works. It didn't cover the dinner; I think the room charge probably paid for the extra waiters. But I'm not sure of all that; you'll have to get that from the staff.

#### Business and Social Uses of the Club

Jacobson: When you first joined the club, were you expecting to use it primarily to further your business or as a social club?

Eliot: I came in with both ideas. Business probably a little stronger at that age and at that time in my life, but then the social side of it built up. I wasn't passing the entire expense account to American President Lines, or even Matson after that, because a good half of it probably was social and was my own.

Jacobson: Did Matson continue to sponsor your membership?

Eliot: Yes, but the Art Institute did not.

Jacobson: What kinds of activities did you participate in socially with the club?

Eliot: Well, I'm not a squash player. There weren't very many real activities there in the early years. I may have gone on a wine tour up to Napa or something like that, but I didn't really take part in much.

Jacobson: But you are a big dominos player, I understand.

Eliot: Well, eventually I became one, but I would qualify the "big" part.

#### The Round Table

Eliot: I used to enjoy very much going to the Round Table. On the fourth floor bar there were two big round tables; one was always known as the "The Round Table." We could jam in ten people, and if there were more of us, there was a long narrow table which we put in so that it looked sort of like a key. When it was really full--it wasn't that way every day by a long shot--we could probably handle about fifteen or sixteen men there. That was

Eliot: great fun. This is where I met a lot of people. Pretty much the same group, but it was a large enough group so that maybe some days there were seven, another day there'd be twelve, and so forth.

Jacobson: How did the Round Table get started?

Eliot: I think originally it started down in the dining room with a group of then older members. Then there became too many of them. I'm not quite sure. A lot of them still stayed at that table downstairs but more of them, especially the new members, came to the upstairs Round Table. They liked to be near the bar. The Round Table is still going, but I don't use it as much. Well, I do go there if I'm not playing dominos, but Tuesdays I play dominos.

Jacobson: So would you use the Round Table at lunch time then?

Eliot: This is lunch I'm talking about.

### Regulars

Jacobson: Who were some of the regulars who sat at the Round Table?

Eliot: Well, again names are so tough to remember for me. Leon de Fremery was one. He always had entertaining stories.

Jacobson: Now he was quite an active member in the club.

Eliot: He was a president of the club. He was an old member of the club and a great storyteller. I can remember him when he was ninety; he had a big, twelve-cylinder Jaguar. He had a daughter down in Aptos on Monterey Bay. He'd get behind the wheel of that darn thing at ninety years old and he was driving over a circuitous route on 17 over to Santa Cruz, around curves. He looked in his mirror and there was a cop behind him with his red light on. So we said, "Well, what did you do Leon?" "Nothing, I just held her right there at seventy and he never blew his siren. I was on the inside lane when he swerved out to come alongside of me and I turned my head toward him and I waved my hand and he waved back and went on." [laughter] Lucky guy. [laughter]

Jacobson: He must have had some wonderful stories!

Eliot: Oh, yes, some wonderful stories. He grew up in the East Bay. There were a lot of good characters and we had a lot of fun at the Round Table. Both Church Peters and his brother Sidney were there; Kirk Underhill; Vilas Beckwith. There were a whole lot us as you can imagine and a lot of younger ones. We got Jack



Eliot: Stuppin. Do you know him? We got him to join. We tried to get some of the younger ones in. Frank King is a loyal Round Tabler. But that was just an enjoyable relaxation during lunch.

When I was at the Art Institute, we had committee meetings once in awhile in the private rooms. It was somewhere along in that period, in the mid-sixties, that I took up dominos again with Peter Folger and Chauncey McKeever, originally.

Jacobson: What kinds of things would you talk about at the Round Table?

Eliot: There was always an interesting diversity of occupations and sports interests at the table. There was always the gang who in the fall went shooting, and they had duck blinds, either in the South Bay or up in the Central Valley. The conversation was mostly on shooting and whether you got your limit or didn't get your limit [laughs]. That was one topic. Then there were golfers at all times except the winter months, and some who used to go down to Pebble Beach to see the Crosby. So we got a great deal of conversation around the table about golf during that period. There were others who did skeet shooting. The club still has, I think, a skeet shooting tournament. They'd talk about that. There were a few at the Round Table who liked to sail. With them I had something in common; all the other things I've just talked about, I don't do any of them. [laughs]

Once in a while we'd get around to business. I remember there were three executives from Robert Kirk, Ltd., and we used to hear a great deal about the good and the bad in the retail business, and trips back East to call on producers, as I remember it. Then there were always a number of brokers, and there were stock tips running around like mad on certain days. Then there were a few who were interested in the arts. The latter part of the time I used to go to the Round Table I was at the Art Institute, as I told you. [Chauncey] McKeever was there, and he was a board member; and Stuppin was a board member, and [Peter] Folger was a board member. We'd sometimes talk about art, particularly the Art Institute.

Oh, I forgot to mention fishing; we had a whole bunch of fishermen there, and that was a lot of talk. [Armond] Suacci was both a fisherman and hunter. Once in awhile the conversation would rise above everything and be interesting--politics, or higher economics, or world affairs--once in awhile. [laughs]

Then there were the usual number of stories, not too many of them. De Fremery used to reminisce about old times, not necessarily at the club, but his own experiences as a youth in the East Bay and so forth; he was a good storyteller.



Dice Games

Eliot: And we shot the dice. If there were enough of us, we rolled for the thirteenth ace. The first player would roll two number ones, so that made the score "two." The next one would roll a one, and that made the score "three." The next one would role nothing, and that cost him two-bits in the pot. You'd bet up to twelve, and if somebody would roll just a one, it became thirteen and he paid for the drinks. If he rolled two, it made fourteen (and every time you rolled an ace you could always have another turn), so he'd roll it again. Let's say he didn't have another ace so the dice box would go to the next guy, and he had to start counting down from fourteen. He hopes he doesn't get a one, but he does, and he pays for the drinks. He hopes that enough quarters are in the pot to alleviate the pain. [laughter] That was a favorite game.

Jacobson: Were there other tables where people tended to group together regularly?

Eliot: I don't think so. For a while, as I told you, there was another sort of a round table downstairs. I'll tell you who used that--he never really joined us upstairs, although he'd come once in a great while--that's Henry Hardy. But he was with the group at the table downstairs. I don't know when they stopped having it.

Now of course they have a big round table upstairs and another downstairs, and any single member of the club can sit at these tables. They provide a free bottle of wine. [laughter] Not a bad deal.

Jacobson: No, not at all.

Club Life in the Fifties

Jacobson: What was the club like when you first came in the fifties?

Eliot: It seems, looking back in memory, much smaller as far as the number was concerned, but it was used much more in the late afternoon and evening. I didn't do too much of that because I was commuting out here to Belvedere.

But at that time, and I think this was true of the other San Francisco clubs, most of the members lived in the city. After work, they'd go up to their clubs and either play a game of bridge or dominos, or just go to the bar and have a couple of drinks before going home. There was a lot of that. When I did

Eliot: go up, let's say between five and six, there'd be quite a group in the main bar up there. You don't see that anymore. Most of the members, I think, live out of town and they go home. That I think is a big change.

The membership has grown a lot. When I first got there, I bet the average age was a little more than it is today. Today, I don't know how old they are, but the average age I bet is younger today. That's all right, that's good because they're much more active.

### Membership Turnover

Eliot: The only thing about the University Club, and maybe other clubs, is you get young ones in and their companies move them and there's a turnover. There's always been a turnover.

Jacobson: But the turnover is even greater now?

Eliot: Probably greater now, but I don't know how many. There always was a turnover of members leaving the University Club to join the Pacific Union or Bohemian Clubs, and many were not able to afford more than one club. But some of the transferees have continued to maintain their membership in the University Club, and still do.

Jacobson: You've only been a University Club member?

Eliot: I've been to the other clubs many times as a guest, but that's all.

Jacobson: Have members used the University Club as a sort of stepping stone?

Eliot: I think a few have. It's still going on, probably, but I bet the percentage of people doing it is less because the membership today is much bigger.

Then you've got another angle today, which didn't hardly exist. The squash courts were there but they were not in very good shape and they were all renovated. They built up the squash membership tremendously, which has been good for the club.

Jacobson: That, I assume, would bring in more younger members.

Eliot: Yes.

Attracting New Members

Jacobson: How do you go about finding new people to join the club?

Eliot: I've never been on the Membership Committee. I have met various men who I thought would enjoy the club and who would be valuable to the club, and I just suggested the possibility of their coming, either bringing them up here, or they'd been here before. That's about it.

Jacobson: Do I understand correctly that the One-and-a-Half parties are sometimes used to get potential members interested in the club?

Eliot: They're still having the One-and-a-Halves. You bring your "prospect," let's call him, to the One-and-a-Half. Certainly if he's interested and really wants to join, you get him down to the application part of it. Then he's crazy not to come, because under the rules he's supposed to know the majority, I think, at least, of the Admissions Committee. So the Admissions Committee meets usually in the Library on One-and-a-Half Nights. One-and-a-Halves are free. You take your candidate, your prospect, in there to meet the Admissions Committee members. That seems to be tantamount to knowing him, which is hardly true, but [laughs] they met him. They can size up the first appearance, I guess, the first impression.

Club Events ##

Jacobson: I wanted to ask you more about some of the club traditions. I understand that there used to be an annual Harvard-Yale get-together to watch or listen to re-broadcasts of the football game.

Eliot: I don't remember that, but the Harvard and Yale Clubs always met for Oaken Bucket Day. But the University Club had nothing to do with it.

Jacobson: What was Oaken Bucket Day?

Eliot: It was a fun picnic. It was a day when Yale Club members and Harvard Club members met at somebody's big place or even at a big park somewhere. We had softball, baseball teams, and tennis tournaments, and a golf tournament, and then we all met for a dinner-dance afterwards.

Eliot: The Harvard Club of San Francisco used to meet occasionally at the University Club. The Yale Club may have done the same, I don't know. Nowadays, neither do.

Jacobson: Were you affiliated with the Harvard Club in any way?

Eliot: Yes, I've always been a member of the Harvard Club of San Francisco. I was president of the Harvard Club one year.

Jacobson: I was reading in the minutes something about clay bird outings.

Eliot: I think what you are referring to is skeet shooting, shooting clay birds from traps. That still goes on, too. I think they just completed one. Frank Adams, who died a few years ago, was a great skeet shooter. That's one of the annual events. Again, I've never been to that.

Jacobson: What other sorts of annual events are there?

Eliot: They used to, and they still do, I think have golf, squash, skeet shooting. I think that's it.

Jacobson: The dominos tournament, is that an annual event?

Eliot: Oh, they always have a dominos tournament. Well, they have a big Calcutta Night. They have a big crowd there that night. I go usually to that one. That's good fun.

Jacobson: What is Calcutta Night?

Eliot: You have a teammate; there may be forty teams. Eighty to a hundred people may show up for those things. At the Calcutta, each team is put up at auction and goes to the highest bidder. This provides the prize money. You can bid for one or more of the other teams to win. The other teams can bid on your team, and you can bid on your own team, too.

#### Club Usage and Attendance Patterns

Jacobson: How did you use the club? How often would you go?

Eliot: I used the club for doing business, I'm just guessing, two or three times a week. Then when I went to the Art Institute, once or twice a week. Then since retirement, it's closer to one and a half times a week probably: once a week often, sometimes twice a week.

Jacobson: You went primarily at lunchtime?



Eliot: I've been referring to luncheons. Mrs. Eliot and I both went to dinner particularly before an ACT show or before a symphony. We'd often have guests, friends, there: sometimes other club members, other times guests from the outside. And I still do, I go to the symphony--I don't go to ACT--and I always ask somebody to go to the club for dinner. Except this Wednesday, when they're having a special event and I can't.

Protecting the Club's View of the City

Eliot: I was first on the board of the University Club in 1951-53. Ducournau was president. We were beginning to get very worried about preserving the view. We had a spectacular view virtually from Treasure Island to the Bay Bridge and over to Mt. Diablo. The campanile at UC [Berkeley] was clearly visible. The whole thing was spread out there. You could see the ships coming in and going out, all over the place. It was beautiful.

This was threatened because somebody was trying to buy up all the land between the club and Joice Street. They planned to put up a big high-rise hotel or apartment house, I don't remember which. They were slowly buying up pieces of property, so we decided to buy that little house on Joice Street. The club still owns it. Did you know that?

Jacobson: No, I wasn't aware of that.

Eliot: It's a two-story house as I recall it. It's right in the middle of the lane. We did that being perfectly nasty. That was going to stop anybody from putting up a high-rise, and it did! They couldn't have possibly done it with that house sitting in the middle. But none of us in the early fifties ever envisioned the skyscrapers down on the mudflats going so high that it would obstruct the view almost completely. Can't see Diablo anymore; we just get a little slit of the bay. But at night the view is quite handsome, beautiful with the lights on in those towers.

Jacobson: Is the house that you bought used by the club in any way?

Eliot: It's rented out. It's still there though, it's still owned by the club.



Offers to Buy the Club's Property

Jacobson: When you were on the board of directors, you mentioned that the board was interested in buying up the Joice Street property so that you could protect your view. Were there any other issues facing the board at that time?

Eliot: I don't remember anything like that except when I was president, 1959-60. Prior to that time, there'd been a lot of probes and offers to buy the club's property and put up a high-rise, the idea being that we'd have priority for a couple of floors in the high-rise. But that would be it, period. These offers were jostled around I don't know many times, but never met with board approval.

About that time, some realty people in Los Angeles called up. The president of the company wanted to have lunch with me. I got Bob Henderson, who was treasurer, and I said, "This club is pretty much against any sellout, but let's go and see what he has to say. He is going to give us a big lunch at the Palace."

So we went there, and they rolled in this fancy, fancy lunch. Yes, they wanted to put a high-rise all the way up. And we said, "Well, can the club have the two top floors?" "No, somewhere in the middle," was the answer. And I said, "I don't think that will ever go over." I knew the club was "fed up" with similar previous offers. But that was a fine lunch.

Renovations

Jacobson: I understand that during the fifties there was an effort to renovate the club.

Eliot: Yes, they did some renovation. I can't remember exactly when it was. I guess it may have been at the end of the fifties. Are you pretty familiar with the club?

Jacobson: Yes.

Eliot: On the third floor, where the third floor bar is now, that was all bedrooms. A hall went down there, and I think there were some rooms on the Powell Street side. There were one or two on the California side, also. They had put two of them together in the corner and that was where the board of directors met. All these bedrooms were wiped out, and the third floor bar was built in that area.

Eliot: Upstairs, the library was always there, but I can't remember what the little private dining room at the end of the art gallery, where the board now meets, was used for. Maybe it was a bar.

Jacobson: Was reducing the club's debts much of an issue in the fifties?

Eliot: No. We borrowed from Stanford. There were wonderful terms and I remember there was an argument between the pros and the cons of let's pay off the mortgage. "Hell, no, we'll never get as good an interest rate. Let's prolong it." I think I sided with the people who wanted to extend the loan. The majority burned the mortgage, but I think they would have been better off continuing it at that low rate. I remember that.

#### Entertainment Committee

Jacobson: Now you were on some committees, I believe.

Eliot: I guess I was on the Entertainment Committee. I don't recall very much about that assignment, although I do remember trying to build up attendance at dinners--maybe have a buffet dinner and stuff like that.

Jacobson: Were the club members using the club for dinner as much as they were for lunch?

Eliot: No. Attendance at dinners was beginning to go down. I suggested buffets for the families one night a week. I think they tried it later on. I'm not sure how it worked, but recently they did have Mother's Day Buffet and Sunday brunches.

Jacobson: I understand that events that have included wives and families have been fairly popular and successful at the club. Is this true?

Eliot: Yes. When I first went there, no females were allowed in the club. I'm not so sure when they permitted women to have dinner there. It was a long way back. Then much later they opened the club up for women at luncheon.

Debate over Women Members

- Eliot: We had three votes over several years about opening the club to women membership. I voted a resounding "no" on all three times, in spite of my feminist daughters and granddaughters. [laughter]
- Jacobson: What was the first issue to come up?
- Eliot: Each time was the same. They got beaten down the first time so they try it again. I know we balloted twice and I'm pretty sure there was a third.
- Jacobson: Why did you vote a resounding no?
- Eliot: Because I like it as a males' club. Delighted to have the ladies there for dinner. For lunch that's all right. But off the fourth floor. I don't want them on the fourth floor for lunches. Now if they're going up there for cocktails before dinner, that's all right, too. I don't mind that. But at lunchtime I like the fourth floor to be stag.
- Jacobson: Why is that?
- Eliot: Because I feel it's very nice to have it stag. It's a men's club.
- Jacobson: You feel you can be more relaxed.
- Eliot: And the Round Table is up there and we can tell all the dirty stories we want, and so forth. That always comes up, you know. But actually when you come right down to it there are a few stories told, but not to the extent that people think there might be. No.
- Jacobson: I take it the male camaraderie is a very important part of the club's ambience.
- Eliot: Yes, sure. And the domino games go on up there in that game area next to the lounge.
- Jacobson: Have any members supported admitting women into the club as members?
- Eliot: Oh, of course, they're the ones who bring it up for us to push down. But now I'm talking like this because I'm sure, if not in my lifetime--and it may happen very quickly as a matter of fact, in my lifetime--I think that women are going to win out eventually. [laughter]
- Jacobson: Have women actually asked to be admitted?

Eliot: I think they've done it obliquely. I think that the women have done it through their husbands. I think that the pressure from the wives on some of the members has caused this. Or it may not be just wives; it may be women partners in their law firms, or women executives in the banks who feel it's unfair. There are all those old arguments. You know them as well as I do.  
[laughter]

Jacobson: I think I came across, in the minutes, a reference to an ad hoc committee of about thirty men called The Committee to Preserve Club Traditions. Do you know anything about that?

Eliot: No, that rings a bell vaguely. That's not too long ago was it?

Jacobson: No, it was very recently and it may have had something to do with admitting women.

Eliot: It may have.

#### Committee of Past Presidents

Eliot: Now I know that the last few active presidents of the club have had meetings with a committee of past presidents. The idea is to try to get whatever ideas the past presidents may have about how the club is being run at a particular moment or what they've done in the past or what they might do as a sounding board for what the current administration thinks would be interesting. I think that works out very well. I like that arrangement.

Jacobson: And you've been on these.

Eliot: I go to the meetings. I go whenever they're held.

Jacobson: What issues are usually raised at these meetings?

Eliot: Oh, all kinds of stuff, financial probably more than any other. But, heavens, what you just mentioned, this--

Jacobson: The issue of admitting women?

Eliot: No, the issue of traditions, that type of thing. Some of issues raised involve labor relations. In the past, labor relations were left almost exclusively with the manager, which I've always felt is wrong. And that's not true just of the University Club, but it's been pretty true of all the clubs. So that when they had the strike at the women's clubs and the men's clubs, the managers were handling it for club members.



Jacobson: That was just a couple of years back.

Eliot: Yes, a few years ago. I really don't remember the details, but I think the presidents learned that they must become much more a part of the negotiations in the future.

Jacobson: This raises a point that I was going to ask you about. In reading over the minutes, I came across references to the San Francisco Club Institute, which apparently handles some of the labor negotiations. There was some discussion about whether or not it was appropriate for the University Club to belong to the Club Institute.

Eliot: I don't know. I'm not up on that one at all.

Jacobson: I think some of the other San Francisco clubs were thinking about dropping out of the Institute.

Eliot: During the strike, some of the clubs went their own way. I was just an outside observer, but you take the Metropolitan Club. They were very independent. They had strike breakers in there, but they finally won a better settlement, according to what I was told at the time. The Commercial Club did the same thing. There were a few of them that did. They held out and still operated.

Jacobson: But the University Club settled.

Eliot: We went along with the rest of them. But at that time we had a different manager. We didn't have Desmond Elder. He's a very capable man.

Jacobson: That's what I've heard.

Eliot: I like him. Yes, sometimes managers have too many axes to grind and shouldn't be in that position. Sometimes they are beholden to a lot of union "do's and don'ts."

Jacobson: Have there been instances where managers have not negotiated well for the University Club because they're too tied to the employees?

Eliot: I'm not a labor relations guy, I really don't know.



Reciprocal Agreements with Other Clubs

- Jacobson: I also read in the minutes that the club has made moves to step up reciprocity agreements with other private men's clubs.
- Eliot: Oh, I think that's a great idea. Our reciprocity has to do with letting members of the selected clubs use our facilities under our club rules. Locally, we have offered other San Francisco clubs the availability of our dining room for dinner. This has been beneficial for us and provides an opportunity for others to have a club dinner when their own dining rooms are closed.
- Jacobson: And is there any exchange whereby the University Club can then use their facilities?
- Eliot: Well, I know whenever we closed the club for renovations we could go to the Concordia Argonaut Club and the Family Club for luncheons.
- Jacobson: I understand that the University Club is also trying to establish reciprocal agreements with clubs in other states.
- Eliot: Oh, yes, they've already done that and are expanding the list. This helps us to maintain a fair occupancy rate for the bedrooms we have.
- Jacobson: Have you ever had occasion to use any of the other clubs?
- Eliot: Let me think. Once, I think in Washington. But a lot of members do.
- Jacobson: Are there other advantages to having these reciprocal agreements aside from keeping your rooms in good use?
- Eliot: Yes, sure. Our members go to other clubs. In most cases, married couples can be accommodated. See! We can't shake the women!
- Jacobson: There you are!
- Eliot: Oh, yes. You'll see a British couple in the lobby every once in awhile checking in or checking out. [laughter]

Value of Active Participation and Club Friendships ##

Jacobson: What characteristics would you say make for a valuable club member?

Eliot: I'm going to put aside the squash courts. I don't play squash, and I don't follow it. I think the main thing I would look for in a new candidate would be somebody who would be really interested in participating in the activities of the club, who would like to get on some of the many committees. Doing that is the best way to meet other club members. I think that would be number one in my book, as opposed to somebody who really just used the club for business purposes the way I did in the beginning. Now there are a lot of members who use it for business purposes but also participate. It's all very well just to come up for a luncheon, but I would look for somebody who really would like to bring his wife, or have parties, and come to dinner, and use the facilities. That's about it, I guess.

Jacobson: I have just one wrap-up question for you, and that is, what has made the club valuable to you?

Eliot: Oh, wow! [pauses] The friends I've made here. That's it.

Jacobson: Has the club's importance to you changed over the years? Have certain aspects of the club become more important than others?

Eliot: Well, my use of it from my business point of view has completely changed; that's been gone since I've retired. And I don't use the club as much because I live in Marin, and it's a little more difficult to get into the city. But no, I enjoy using the club, and I do come. I enjoy sitting at the club table; I enjoy my domino games once a week; I enjoy taking family members or friends to dinner here before the theater or a concert or what have you. And I enjoy some of the things they put on; they're a lot of fun, too--like going to the Whiffenpoof Party, and so forth.

Jacobson: Thank you very much for this interview.

Transcriber: Kathleen Dickson  
Final Typist: Kate Stephenson



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Frederick Johnson

The University Club of San Francisco:  
One Hundred Years of Tradition and Change

An interview Conducted by  
Lisa Jacobson  
in 1987





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## FREDERICK JOHNSON

Born in the Los Angeles in 1927, Frederick Johnson received a B.A. from Cornell University in 1948 and a Ph.D. from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1952 before becoming a chemist. His career took him later into commercial real estate brokerage. He joined the University Club in 1953 and served as president in 1971-1972.



BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name Frederick O. Johnson

Date of birth 8-2-27 Birthplace Los Angeles, CA

Father's full name Howard A. Johnson

Occupation Insurance broker Birthplace Los Angeles, CA

Mother's full name Virginia McNaughton

Occupation At home Birthplace Appleton, Wisconsin

Your spouse Marilyn Harley

Your children Victoria, Ann, Frederick, Jr., and Seth Johnson

Where did you grow up? Los Angeles, CA

Present community Berkeley, CA

Education A.B., Cornell University (1948); Ph.D., M.I.T. (1952)

Occupation(s) Chemical research; commercial chemical development;  
commercial real estate brokerage

Areas of expertise \_\_\_\_\_

Other interests or activities \_\_\_\_\_

Organizations in which you are active \_\_\_\_\_





## I THE UNIVERSITY CLUB

[Date of Interview: August 25, 1987]##

Frederick Johnson: Background

Jacobson: I thought we could start with a little bit of background about you, before we launch into the history of the University Club. Could you tell me when and where you were born, and a little bit about your education and early professional life before you joined the club?

Johnson: I was born in Los Angeles in 1927. I spent my high school years in Southern California. My higher education includes an A.B. degree from Cornell University and a Ph.D. from MIT in 1952. Following that I came to the San Francisco area to be employed. I was first with the Chevron Research Corporation, and later with the Chevron Chemical Company until 1971.

Joining the University Club

Jacobson: Was it while you were with Chevron that you learned about the University Club?

Johnson: Yes.

Jacobson: How did that come about?

Johnson: Well, I knew that a number of cities had university clubs. My father had been a long-time member of the University Club in Los Angeles, and he had suggested the San Francisco University Club as a place to enjoy other professional people. Through the son of one of his good friends, whom I knew, I was introduced to the University Club and to various members there.

Jacobson: Did you ever see the University Club in Los Angeles?

Johnson: Oh, yes, many times.

Jacobson: What kind of flavor did you get of that, that made you seek out the University Club up here?

Johnson: Basically, the ambience of the club, the various individuals that I had met there in Los Angeles through my father.

Jacobson: How were you recruited? How did you come to join the University Club in San Francisco?

Johnson: I would say that at that point there was, as opposed to today, really no recruitment as such going on; it was just more a question of your knowing people who were members and being asked if you would like to join, which was my case.

Jacobson: Who sponsored your membership?

Johnson: A gentleman by the name of George Green, Jr., the son of one of my father's close friends.

Jacobson: What year was it that you joined?

Johnson: I believe it was 1954.

#### Club Facilities and Physical Appearance

Jacobson: What was the club like when you joined it?

Johnson: That's a very difficult question to answer.

Jacobson: What did it look like physically? Was it much different from the way it looks now?

Johnson: Obviously there have been significant renovations in the last thirty-five years. There are several public rooms in the club now that did not exist at that time, such as the Cable Car Room and the facilities in the basement for parties and receptions. And of course there have been major renovations with the squash courts. But basically the ground floor is essentially the same. On the second floor several rooms were removed to make room for the Cable Car Room, and there has been extensive upgrading of the bedroom facilities, which over the years did become quite shabby. I'm just trying to recall--the dining room was expanded and the bar area in the dining room was opened up from one or two other smaller rooms that were in that area. The fourth floor is essentially the same as I remember it.

Jacobson: I remember other members telling me that the early fifties was a time when they were trying to rehabilitate the place; it had been let go a bit during the war years.

Johnson: That was, I'm sure, very much the case. I can't recall the sequence in which things were done, but certainly there were changes of that sort made in the fifties. The first changes that I recall were made under the management of John Schaeffer, such as the Cable Car Room, the dining facilities in the basement area, and the expansion of the third floor dining room and bar. Then there were more recent times when the bedrooms were extensively redone, when the squash courts were expanded. There have been other times when "behind-the-walls" type of renovation has gone on--plumbing, electrical, and that sort of thing.

Jacobson: I'm curious about the Cable Car Room. What is that used for?

Johnson: It's used for small lunches or dinners. It's a self-contained unit with its own bar and may seat comfortably twenty people or something like that. It has nice enlarged photographs of San Francisco with the cable car featured; quite nice. Although many people have felt that it has been kind of an unwieldy room to circulate in.

Jacobson: Why is that?

Johnson: Because of the arrangements of the eating tables in there. So I understand there has been talk to do something more with that room, to make some changes there. I don't know just what.

#### Club Managers

Jacobson: You mentioned John Schaeffer. Was he one of the club managers?

Johnson: Yes. If I recall correctly, he was one of the four managers that I've experienced since being in the club. The first one happened to be Mr. Bailey, who was manager when I joined the club.

Jacobson: Was Schaeffer a good manager?

Johnson: He was a good autocratic manager. In other words, he was an ex-Marine and he knew how he thought a club should be managed. He was controversial; he sure rubbed some people the wrong way. But he got things done, and I think he was certainly a good, strong manager.

Jacobson: How did most of the members respond to him?

Johnson: Oh, I think probably basically well, most of them. But I think, in talking about club managers, it's important to state that the finest possible manager that the club has had is the current manager [Desmond Elder], who is truly a professional manager who has, I think, spent most of his career in managing clubs and does it extremely well.

Jacobson: The others before have not been professional managers?

Johnson: I don't know about Mr. Bailey, but he was relatively weak, in the sense that he had not a great deal of initiative and imagination. Patrick [Jones], who succeeded Mr. Schaeffer, really had no training whatsoever; he had done a good job of being maitre d' in the dining room. But that's a big jump, to go from maitre d' to run a club in all of its aspects.

Jacobson: Had the other managers worked at the club before?

Johnson: No, but they'd had previous club experience.

### Activities

Jacobson: What about some of the club activities and traditions that stand out in your mind?

Johnson: There are so many that it's hard to pinpoint everything. Certainly, without question, over the years, I think my wife and I have enjoyed the numerous social events, primarily dinners of one sort or another, which have always been highlighted by the Christmas Dinner Dance. Over the years there have been frequent wine and food occasions. But then there are such varied events, which might only be annual events, such as the Trap and Skeet Shoot that Frank Adams was so much a part of, and which today carries his name. In the past there has been an Annual Golf Tournament. Dominos, as you know, have been a big activity in the club; there are several domino tournaments over the year.

Jacobson: Is that something you participate in?

Johnson: Not much, no. I play dominos from time to time, but I've never played in any of the tournaments. But I'm aware that it's a very popular activity in the club. And, of course, over the years squash has become a major activity within the club, and I think without question has been a drawing card for a number of new members in the club. Even though it's been a very expensive investment, I think certainly it has attracted a lot of members who would not otherwise have joined the club. I've never been a



Johnson: squash player. But I've been generally a tacit supporter of the club activities and the monies that have been required to support them.

These days, particularly, there seems to be more activities than ever, in terms of what the Entertainment Committee does provide on the calendar. The Arts and Literature Committee, over the years, and more particularly in recent years, has put on events of a musical nature in the evening, where small musical groups will perform. Or there will be speakers' luncheons, where people of note will come and speak on their particular topic.

### Club Usage

Jacobson: What kinds of activities do you enjoy most?

Johnson: I would say that probably just going to the club and enjoying it, enjoying the people there, and sometimes getting together for occasions with other couples. Or during the day going to lunch and just seeing friends and visiting.

Jacobson: How often do you use the club?

Johnson: I use it much less frequently now than in the past. Probably now, no more than a couple of times a month; whereas in years past when I was in the city all the time, at least once a week. When I was more active in the club in terms of committees, I would be in the club much more often. I am retired now and, living in Berkeley, have occasion to visit the club, particularly on a drop-in basis.

Jacobson: Would you come in for lunch on a regular basis?

Johnson: Oh, yes, just drop in. We have a very fine drop-in table on the fourth floor, where you just go up and take your seat and enjoy it. I would say, quite honestly, that I have eaten at the fourth floor table--the members' table, or The Round Table, as it's been called--much more often than I have eaten in the main dining room, primarily because I don't take guests to the club for lunch all that often.

Jacobson: On what occasions would you take a guest to the club?

Johnson: I would say primarily for dinner, and then it's usually family.

Jacobson: Is this anything you would use with your associates at Chevron?

Johnson: Very, very seldom. I did not mix business with the club very much at all.

### The Round Table

Jacobson: What was it about the fourth floor Round Table that drew you up there, instead of the main dining room?

Johnson: Oh, I'd say the informality and the grilled food that was prepared up there.

Jacobson: So the menu was different?

Johnson: For many years it was, yes. There were some nice little items you could get up there that weren't generally available on the third floor.

Jacobson: Things like--?

Johnson: Welsh rarebit, for example; you could order your own individual Welsh rarebit. And they did have a grill going for many years where you could get your hamburger made any way you wanted. That was a very nice spot, too, when it was open on Saturdays for lunch. But as time went on and the pattern of club usage changed, the club became shut down for lunch on Saturday, and eventually the preparation of the food in the fourth floor bar was discontinued because it was costing more to man the facility than business was being generated. But still, there is that patronage on the fourth floor in the bar.

Jacobson: Who would sit at the Round Table? Were there regulars?

Johnson: Oh, yes, there were regulars. I'm surprised you've not heard about the Round Table. I think it's one of the great traditions in the Club. I wouldn't want to say it was for the older members only, because I probably started eating up there, oh, about 1965 or '66. Of course, you would never know who would come. There were times when there would be as many as thirteen or fourteen people up there, and you'd have to pull over another table, fit two tables together, to have the group.

Just to name a few, there would be Chauncey McKeever, Church Peters, Ted Eliot, Armond Suacci, Beck [S. Vilas] Beckwith, Frank King, Tony Schilling, Herman Bishopric. Other regulars that come to mind are Sidney Peters, Wendell Nicolaus, Arthur Schoenfeldt, Walter Garrigan, Jack Booth, Charlie Thorndike, Byron Josi, and, of course, Kirk Underhill, Frank Adams, and Bob Dewey. [phone interruption]

Jacobson: You were telling me about some of the members of the Round Table--

Johnson: Yes, and there they are [shows photographs], because I just happen to have these pictures that I've taken on various occasions. I mentioned to you Church Peters and Beck Beckwith.

Jacobson: These look like members who have been with the club for quite a long while.

Johnson: Oh, yes, very definitely. Unfortunately, Beck has passed on. Church Peters, as you probably know, is the oldest active member in the Club. And you recognize Henry Hardy. Here is one of the great, great men of the club, Leon de Fremery, just a marvelous man.

Jacobson: What was Leon's contribution to the club?

Johnson: Well, he was president of the club in his day. It's sometimes hard to pinpoint this word "contribution." In other words, it's so much the spirit of the individual, as much as anything, rather than having spearheaded a fund-raising drive or anything like that.

This is Julian Bartlett, and Bish Bishopric; this is Jack Boden, whom we don't see much of these days. This is a marvelous man who used to be with us, Southall Pfund. How do you like that for a name? There's Mr. Eliot.

### Dice Games

One of the favorite activities at the table was shaking for drinks, with a dice roll. Here's Gene Gillis, a former president; there's Chauncey McKeever; and there's Jack Stuppin, who's been a long-time friend at the table. Here's Bill Sumner, one of our more recent presidents; Tony Schilling; and another man, Jud Levensaler; and Shane Butler.

Jacobson: Was there betting in these dice games?

Johnson: No, it was just a question of who pays for the drinks--very, very low stakes, but it would get quite exciting when you'd hit a day when thirteen or fourteen people showed up for the table. But normally there would be five, six, or seven people at the table.

Jacobson: What kinds of dice games did you play?

Johnson: Well, for small groups, it's usually the traditional game of Boss dice, which I think is played mostly around San Francisco. For larger groups there was a game called the Thirteenth Ace.

Jacobson: How is that played?

Johnson: This might take a little time for me to tell you [laughs]. I've never explained it before. You play with five die. Whoever, cumulatively, comes up with the thirteenth ace is the winner--the winner being, really, the loser, because that means you buy the drinks. If you role five dice and you get five aces, you continue to roll until you don't role an ace. When that point comes, you pass it on to the person next to you. If you roll your five dice, for example, and you don't come up with an ace, you just pass the dice on to the next person. The next person rolls until he stops rolling an ace. If I pass the dice to you and the cumulative number of aces so far is eleven, and you roll two aces and no more aces, then you have the thirteenth.

However, if you roll three aces, your score is fourteen. You can keep going up. In other words, you would roll again, and if you got another ace the cumulation would be fifteen. Then you would roll until you stopped rolling aces. Then the next person starts to roll, taking over whatever your number was. If you had rolled fifteen, and he rolls two aces, that lowers it to thirteen. If he doesn't roll another ace, he's at thirteen. But if he were to roll four aces he would be back down to eleven. So this can go up and down, with respect to the thirteen, and gets very interesting.

Jacobson: I imagine it would take quite a long time.

Johnson: Sometimes it does, sometimes it doesn't.

Jacobson: What other dice games were there?

Johnson: Those are basically it.

#### Luncheon Conversation Topics

Jacobson: What kinds of things would you discuss at lunch at the Round Table?

Johnson: It would vary from day to day. There was never a set pattern of discussion. Very often it might be briefly news events, what one might have read in the newspaper that day in terms of what was going on in San Francisco politically; or some show that was in town that somebody might have seen and brought up, some musical



Johnson: event--the opera; something that might have come up in the business section. Very often it was about what one has been doing, what the family's been doing, just talking about your own personal interests that people over a period of time come to be aware of and know what your interests are, and so forth, as opposed to the kind of conversation you might have with somebody that you don't see that often.

Jacobson: So there was quite a bit of camaraderie?

Johnson: Oh, yes, very much so.

Jacobson: And people showed up regularly enough that--

Johnson: Regularly enough, yes.

Jacobson: It sounds like a wonderful way to spend your lunch.

Johnson: Oh, yes, you can do an awful lot in forty-five minutes.

#### Wine Committee

Jacobson: You mentioned belonging to a number of committees.

Johnson: No, not really. No, I've just belonged to two committees in the club, the Wine Committee and the Admissions Committee.

Jacobson: You belonged to the Wine Committee when it first started, back in '63.

Johnson: Yes, that's correct.

Jacobson: What was the Wine Committee doing back then? Why was it formed?

Johnson: At that time, I think more than ever in the past, wine was coming onto the scene as something that was of greater interest to people. There was really no focus on it in the club. The manager really did not know much about wine, and a number of us felt it would be a benefit to the club to have a selection of wines available that would represent the good wines available not only in California but in France, and it would be an enjoyable type of committee to form. It was formed with George Hale as the first chairman.

Jacobson: What kinds of things did the committee start out doing?##

Johnson: Trying to design a cellar that would bring in quality wines at prices that the membership would be willing to pay for. There would be monthly meetings to taste wines, which were usually made



Johnson: available by different wine wholesalers in San Francisco. Then this went on to sponsoring wine dinners featuring wines that the committee had selected for the club.

Jacobson: Would there be wine tastings at those dinners?

Johnson: There would occasionally be wine tastings as such, but more often there were wine and food dinners that were put on and sponsored by the Wine Committee. As I recall, we didn't have that many club-wide tastings. Occasionally, yes, but not all that often.

Jacobson: The Wine Committee continues to build up the cellar?

Johnson: Yes, and it's really become big business in the club, in the sense that in tune with changing drinking patterns, there is considerably more dollar-volume sales of wine than there is of spirits.

#### Changes in Drinking Habits

Jacobson: Have you noticed a big change in the drinking habits over time of the members?

Johnson: Yes, I think so.

Jacobson: How have they changed?

Johnson: I think particularly among the younger people there is more of an interest in wine, more wine consumption, and with their guests as well. The squash players generally drink wine, and also like beer very much. As a result I think you find less of the standard spirits like bourbon or scotch or gin being consumed.

#### One-and-a-Half Drinks

Jacobson: Was there ever a club favorite drink?

Johnson: I would say that there has been a club drink, which has been referred to as the One-and-a-Half. I think that might have come up in conversation. When one would want one of those drinks, rather than asking for a martini over ice, just "I'd like a One-and-a-Half," which is basically an ounce and a half of gin, with a little bit of vermouth and an olive or a lemon twist over ice. There's always a little feeling among some of us that the only really top-notch One-and-a-Half you can get is in the fourth floor bar, that for some reason it never comes out as well in the third floor bar.

Jacobson: Why is that?

Johnson: Oh, just mystique as much as anything else. Because we've always prided ourselves on our fourth floor bartenders, but the bartender on the third floor, I'm sure, can make as good a One-and-a-Half. But for some reason we always felt that the One-and-a-Halves coming out of the fourth floor bar were the very best.

### Bartenders and Waiters

Jacobson: Who were the bartenders on the fourth floor?

Johnson: I have to think for just a moment. Their pictures are hanging in the fourth floor bar. The first one I remember was Hong, and the second one's name--was it Wong? His picture is up there also.

Jacobson: What were the interactions with the bartenders like?

Johnson: I would say very comfortable. I think the University Club over the years has been very fortunate to have a real stability among its employees. Just by virtue of the fact that they were good employees and would be there over a period of time, you would get to know them. For example, this man here [points to picture], who has left us, Donald, he was just amazing. He would remember what everybody would drink. You would just go in and sit down, and you wouldn't even order a drink; he'd bring it right to you. Just outstanding.

Jacobson: He was one of the waiters?

Johnson: He was one of the fourth floor waiters.

Jacobson: Did the employees have a special floor, or did they rotate?

Johnson: No, most of them were assigned to the third floor. There's always been the head bartender and two waiters at noontime on the fourth floor. For example, Donald was never there at night. He basically was part time, but very, very steady part time. I think that's true also of Warren, who is still there on the fourth floor.

Jacobson: Was it considered a choice assignment to get the fourth floor during Round Table lunchtime?

Johnson: Oh, I don't think necessarily so, because another very important element to serve also is the Domino Room. We haven't even mentioned the Domino Room, and that, of course, is part of the

Johnson: lifeblood of the club at noon. Invariably it's quite full in there with domino players, and occasionally now a group of bridge players.

Admissions Committee

Jacobson: What about the Admissions Committee? You've been on that before. What kind of work did you do for that?

Johnson: Basically it is meeting applicants and screening the applications, in the sense of going over them to make sure they are complete before they are submitted for consideration. That means, if necessary, and that sometimes is the case, to work with the sponsor to make sure everything is filled out and so forth. If someone has never sponsored someone before, he might not know exactly how to fill out the forms or what's important and what isn't. Then meeting once a month to hear the proposer propose the candidate for membership, and review the letters that are written on behalf of the candidate for membership.

Jacobson: What sorts of things do you look for in a prospective member?

Johnson: We look for somebody who we think will be a congenial member in the club; somebody who basically is a gentleman; who--very important--will pay his bills, in other words is financially responsible; is not loud or unruly, particularly if he's had a drink or two; and who we feel will make a contribution to the club, as the club is basically a social institution. We are looking to preserve those various aspects that comprise a social institution.

Jacobson: Do you meet in informal settings with the candidate before making your decision?

Johnson: Not individually. Normally, preceding the meeting to consider the applicant--it might be the week before, sometimes a month or more might go by--as many members of the committee as possible meet with several applicants in the library, usually with their sponsors. We meet them on that occasion and have an opportunity as a rule to chat for, oh, five minutes or so with the person to just get a feel for him, meet with him.

Jacobson: What sorts of reasons would come up for rejecting an applicant?

Johnson: Well, I can't speak for all times, but very few applicants are turned down, in my experience. I would say that most of the applicants that I am aware of who have been turned down, have been turned down as a result of information coming from other

Johnson: members. Once the Admissions Committee has passed on an applicant, his name with the sponor's is posted on the bulletin board for the period of one month, so that the membership has an opportunity to know who is being proposed. Occasionally a member will know something about the applicant that has not been generally known. This may involve personal life or business life. They may have had some very bad experience, or they may know of situations that the individual has been in that should come to the attention of the committee, all of which is done in the strictest of privacy. And occasionally an applicant is turned down.

Jacobson: But you say it is quite a rarity?

Johnson: I would say pretty much so, yes.

Jacobson: Has the Admission Committee ever thought of ways of expanding membership?

Johnson: The Admissions Committee has not done so directly, but the Membership Committee very much has done so.

#### Membership Committee

Jacobson: Is that something the club is trying to do deliberately?

Johnson: Oh, yes.

Jacobson: In what ways has it gone about trying to increase its membership base?

Johnson: One way that has facilitated this is that in a number of cases an applicant may only know one person in the club at all well who is qualified to sponsor him. And there are also needed a seconder and five other people who are willing to write letters on behalf of that applicant. Very often the Membership Committee comes in and will take over that responsibility of introducing the applicant to other people in the club, and particularly people on the Membership Committee will make a point of getting to know the individual so that they are in a position to write letters, even though they will not know him for, very often, more than six months or so. But at least the Admissions Committee knows who is on the Membership Committee, and when somebody on the Membership Committee is writing in that capacity he can give that letter credence, as opposed to such a letter coming from some relatively unknown member in the club.



Board Member, Officer: 1969-72

Jacobson: You've held offices a couple of times. You were president in the early '70s, and you were vice-president and also on the board of directors in '69 and '70. During those years when you were on the board or had an office, what needed your attention the most in the Club?

Johnson: Although all the information is well documented in the records, and I cannot speak precisely to all of the points involved, there's no question but what during the three years that I was on the board the principal challenge was to rescind the April 1969 joint venture agreement that had been made with Mr. Ben Swig and the Fairmont Hotel for a joint operation of the building next door at 830 Powell Street.

There followed after the agreement diligent efforts by the club's board of directors to obtain a sound economic basis for an ownership interest in 830 Powell Street. During the protracted period of negotiations the Fairmont joined with the club in a McEnerney quiet title action\* whereby the club acquired ownership of Miles Court, subject only to a right of ingress and egress reserved to 830 Powell Street. When it became apparent that there was no economically sound basis for the club's eventually acquiring 830 Powell Street from the Fairmont, the 1969 agreement was rescinded in December 1971.

Jacobson: How was the agreement made?

Johnson: [laughs] I would rather research the documents on this, because I haven't done so for some fifteen years. But it was a very complicated relationship that the previous board had entered into with Mr. Swig. After it was done, it was apparent that it was not in the best interests of the club. It took several years and considerable monies to extricate ourselves from that arrangement.

Jacobson: What was the drawback to the arrangement?

Johnson: As I say, I would rather go back and review the whole thing, because I don't like to draw that much on my memory at this point. I'm not trying to hide anything from you, because it's all in the record. I would say that two people who certainly can remember it very, very well are Henry Hardy and Chauncey McKeever.

---

\*The McEnerney Act reestablished land titles in San Francisco after the earthquake and fire in 1906.



Jacobson: Aside from the Swig affair, what other issues were preoccupying you?

Johnson: I'm not aware of any issues.

Jacobson: I went through some of the minute books from those years and noted a few things that I wanted to ask you about. I thought you could give me more information than what was jotted down in the minute books. Apparently in 1969, one of the club members' wives wrote a letter suggesting that the wives be allowed in for dinner unaccompanied by their husbands, and that request was denied. Do you remember anything about that?

Johnson: No, I don't.

Jacobson: Were wives becoming more involved in the club at that time?

Johnson: I don't recall them becoming any more involved, because I always felt that the wives were very much involved in the club's social activities. I do recall, and I don't know what year it was, whether it was in the early seventies, when it was voted for the first time to have women come in to lunch at the club on the third floor.

Jacobson: How did that decision come about?

Johnson: I think just a growing interest on the part of the membership for this, and it was put to a vote.

Jacobson: Was there any resistance to it?

Johnson: As I recall, I think it fairly handily passed.

Jacobson: There was something in the minutes about resigning the club's membership in the National Club Managers Association. Is that anything significant?

Johnson: Only in terms of the aspect of labor negotiations. And again, I would want to review things a little more carefully. But this has always been of interest or concern as to how effective it is for the club to remain part of that unit, where bargaining is done for all the clubs, as opposed to going on your own and making your own labor negotiations.

Jacobson: Did you as an officer have any dealings with the National Managers Association?

Johnson: No. Not always, but as a rule this is a function that the club manager is very much involved in. Although it is certainly the responsibility of the board to know what the implications of all of this are.

Jacobson: So John Schaeffer, for example, would have been--

Johnson: Yes.

Jacobson: There was something about instituting a minimum use charge of ten dollars, back in 1970.

Johnson: Hmmm. [laughs] Not a month; no, it couldn't be. It must be a mistake.

Jacobson: They've gone up considerably since?

Johnson: Yes. I've never had trouble meeting my minimum. I sometimes forget what it is, but I think it's \$120 or \$125 a quarter.

Jacobson: But back in '70 minimum use fees had never been assessed?

Johnson: No. I say that; I don't recall minimum use fees being in effect before that time.

Jacobson: Do you remember what brought them about?

Johnson: Simply to assure that every member does utilize the club on a minimum basis, because it was being noted that there were at least a few members who would pay their monthly dues but who'd never come into the club. It was felt that it was desirable to obtain on one basis or another the benefit of their expenditures.

Jacobson: Did it have the effect of bringing in members more on a regular basis?

Johnson: I think to a certain extent it did, without question. Although there were other ways in which you could at that time meet your minimum. For example, you could meet it simply by buying your minimum amount in kind--by buying liquor or wine. Overnight use of the bedrooms, for example, would contribute to your minimum use. But today you can't buy wine or liquor to satisfy your minimum. Although what they have done to make sure everybody has a chance to spend his minimum is that at the end of every quarter they have a specific party, which is a "spend your minimum" get together. Because there are some people in the past who have said, "Gee, I just haven't had a chance to do it this quarter, and I'd forgotten completely; gee, I wish I could spend some of it." So now they've instituted this quarterly affair that gives you a chance to spend some of your money.

Jacobson: There was something that popped up in the minute books around 1971. There was a motion to add a formal resolution that membership not be denied or granted on the basis of race, creed, color, ethnicity, religion or politics. Do you remember that as being a controversial discussion with the board at that time?

Admission of Women

Johnson: I really don't, no. It was not until later on in that decade when there was more of an interest in considering the admittance of women in the club.

Jacobson: Is that something that has come up repeatedly?

Johnson: No, but I would say in the last probably ten years it's come up a couple of times in terms of full membership participation. In other words, there has been not just consideration at the board level, but an opportunity to get input from the entire membership.

Jacobson: Was there a vote taken?

Johnson: Yes, in 1977 by the board. In 1981 an Admissions Policy Committee studied the matter of women's membership and recommended to the board no change in the club's admission policy.

Jacobson: Do you remember the discussions that preceded the vote on that?

Johnson: Yes, I attended various discussions. I think basically there are two things at work, one of which I don't agree with and one of which is probably quite understandable. The one thing that I don't agree with is the increasing need or desire of government to impose its regulations on individual groups. The other aspect that I think needs to be recognized is that times change, interests change, and the concept of an all-men's club has changed quite a bit over the years. There are now many members who, indeed, would like to have women as members. I would like to think that when that time comes, if there is a majority in the club they will vote on it and it will come to pass, rather than its being rammed down their throats. I, myself, have never found it to be an issue; I've felt that there's been no need to change the character of the club by having women join, in the sense that they participate so much in our activities anyway. I know my wife belongs to an all-women's organization, and she shudders to think that legislation is going to occur, that they may be required by law to bring in men. I think it would be too bad if that had to be the case.

Jacobson: How concerned as a whole, would you say, is the club about some of this legislation that might threaten the all-male status at the club?

Johnson: I don't know, I haven't talked with enough individuals, but I think that many people are writing letters to people in Sacramento who are on various committees that tend to control such things.

Jacobson: Has there ever been an organized letter-writing effort on the part of the club members, or is this something that individuals do?

Johnson: No, individuals, although I'm sure the president of the club will write a letter on behalf of the University Club.

Jacobson: What sorts of arguments are brought up in favor of, say, admitting women beyond the accesss that they already have as guests of the club?

Johnson: Well, I guess some members just like to have women as members. Of course, there frequently is brought up the argument that women are being excluded from these clubs, which are hot spots for making deals and conducting high level business transactions, and this sort of thing--##

In my own experience in the University Club I have really not been aware of the club being used to hatch deals or push deals or conclude deals. I, myself--and certainly this is not true of everyone--have always paid my own membership, paid my own dues, and have never relied upon my company to pick up the tab for these things. Certainly, the people that I know in the club have been there because of its social connotations.

Jacobson: What sorts of objections are raised to admitting women as full members?

Johnson: As much as anything, why rock the boat? I suppose that might be referred to as maintaining the status quo. As I mentioned a moment ago, it's entirely possible in the evolution of social outlook that a majority of the members in time will feel, yes, let's have women members, and that will come to pass. And I think, quite possibly, it's going in that direction. I think it could be part of a natural evolution. For example, I am sure that if you were to start a University Club from scratch today, there's no question but that it would have both men and women members.

Jacobson: So is it the older members who are holding out?

Johnson: Interestingly enough, only in part. I can't recall the details, but it seems to me the last time a survey was run--and I think the vote was something like 60 percent against and 40 percent for--the responses were sorted by age groups, and a larger percentage of people in the thirty-five to fifty or fifty-five age group were in favor of having women as members, as compared with a somewhat lesser percentage among the older members and the very young members. [laughs]

Jacobson: Do you have any idea why that might be?



Johnson: No, no.

Jacobson: Is there pressure coming from the wives of members to open up--?

Johnson: Not that I'm aware of, no. In other words, I don't know, but I've certainly not heard of this. Certainly none of the wives that I know of are in favor. I wouldn't really expect them to benefit from it, even if it did come to pass. In other words, they themselves would not become members.

Jacobson: Is this whole issue something that's discussed at all at the club?

Johnson: Oh, it is from time to time, yes. Every time there's something that comes out of the newspaper or what have you. You probably caught the Channel 9 Express program that our Club president, Malcolm Post appeared on, when this issue was very clearly discussed. I think at issue was a man who was demanding to be admitted into an all-female health club. It's the most ridiculous issue [laughs], but it tended to focus on the overall problem. I can't recall, there might have been two programs. But in any event, on one of them they actually brought cameras into the University Club and showed pictures of it on TV. You should check that out; it's too bad that you weren't alerted to that.

Jacobson: Did Malcolm Post make a good case for the University Club--

Johnson: --maintaining its current status, yes.

Jacobson: What were his principle arguments?

Johnson: Oh, along the lines we've just been discussing, in terms of first of all resisting governmental pressures to bring about changes of this sort; the traditions of the club, which have not found the need to change, but has existed for many, many years with the opportunities that exist and abound for women to participate in virtually all of the club activities, except bringing in their own people for lunch or dinner. I mean, women can even play squash! There are some very good squash players down there. [laughs]

#### Major Changes in the Club's Character

Jacobson: Has the club changed much in character over the years?



Johnson: I can only say as someone inside the club, as opposed to someone outside looking in. It hasn't changed to that extent, in terms of my own involvement and activities in it, although a club really has to change, inevitably, in terms of just turnover in membership. And, as I say, the squash courts did make a definite change in the composition of the membership, I think all for the better.

Jacobson: Have the squash players changed the flavor of the club at all?

Johnson: No, but as I mentioned earlier, because of their existence they have attracted a number of members who otherwise would not have joined the club, and they have been some very good members. Although there has been the criticism that many of the squash players just come to play squash and don't use the club, but that's what we have a minimum use charge for.

Jacobson: So the squash players aren't necessarily the domino crowd?

Johnson: No, that's true. But, again, some of them participate in everything. As a matter of fact, two of the inveterate users of the squash court and the Domino Room are two former presidents, Murray Smith and Ned Mundell. Among other things, they represent the bridge contingent of the club [laughs] and the squash courts.

#### Value of Active Participation and Club Camaraderie

Jacobson: What would you say are the characteristics that make a member valuable to the club?

Johnson: His participation. As I say, there are so many ways that a person can participate through committee activity. Many of the committees, if anyone wants to try his hand at it, he just says to the chairman, "Hey, I'd like to be on this committee," and he's on the committee. It's a great way to get to know people in the club. I think it's too bad if a person does join a club and then not avail himself of all the activities that go on.

Jacobson: What has made the club valuable to you?

Johnson: The people. No question, it's been the people who have attracted and kept my interest over the years, and that of my wife. Because from the very beginning we met people, in the fifties, who became very good friends, who continue as very, very close friends today.

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John Lewis

The University Club of San Francisco  
One Hundred Years of Tradition and Change

An Interview Conducted by  
Lisa Jacobson  
in 1986



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## JOHN LEWIS

Born in New York City, in 1908, Captain John Lewis graduated from Harvard University in 1930 and joined the Navy shortly thereafter. A job with Shell Oil Company brought him to San Francisco in 1934, and he became a member of the University Club that same year. He held a special military membership during his years of active duty from 1939 to 1955, and he was elected an honorary member in 1983. He served as president in 1968-69.



BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name John Greenough Lewis  
Date of birth Aug 5, 1908 Birthplace New York N.Y.  
Father's full name Edison Lewis (Dec)  
Occupation Executor Birthplace Camden Maine  
Mother's full name Edith Greenough Lewis (Dec)  
Occupation Housewife Birthplace Southampton N.Y.  
Your spouse Natalie Greene Lewis  
Your children John G. Jr., Edison, Natalie C.  
Stephen C.

Where did you grow up? East Coast  
Present community Nicasio, Calif.  
Education St. Mark's School, Southboro, Mass 6 yrs. Harvard  
Univ. 4 yrs. U.S. Navy Flight School, Pensacola Fla 1 yr  
Occupation(s) U.S. Navy Ensign - Captain, Flight Officer

Areas of expertise Sales, Business Development.

Other interests or activities Horseback riding, Tennis

Organizations in which you are active Order of Daedalus, Naval  
Order of the U.S.,



## I THE UNIVERSITY CLUB

[Date of Interview: December 10, 1987]

Background

Jacobson: Why don't we start with a little bit of background on yourself. Could you tell me when you were born, and a little bit about your education, and your professional life before you joined the club?

Lewis: Well, I was born in 1908, August 5. I went to school in the East, at Harvard University, graduated in 1930. And then I went through Navy flight school at Pensacola for 1930-31, and spent a year with the fleet on the U.S.S. Langley (CV-1) in 1931 and 1932. Then I got a job out here in the Shell Oil Company and came out from the East. I was born in New York City. Came and worked for Shell for five years in the sales department until the Navy ordered me back to active duty in April of 1939.

So then I went over to the Naval Reserve Aviation Base in Oakland at the airport, and was a flight instructor for Navy flight students. Then I applied for commission in the regular Navy because Congress passed a bill providing that certain reserve aviators could do this. I was selected and was commissioned in the regular Navy in 1941, after which they discovered I'd been on shore duty for eleven or twelve years, so they ordered me to sea on the U.S.S. Saratoga (CV-3). I was on her when the war began, and stayed on her until January 1943, and then came back and was stationed at Watsonville Naval Auxillary Air Station as commanding officer until August of 1945. Then I was sent to sea on the U.S.S. Kalimin Bay (CVE-68), a small carrier, as executive officer. I was on that when the war ended.



Military Membership in the Club

Jacobson: Sounds like you were out and about enough to not be here to use the club much?

Lewis: Well, I use to come up here every once in a while. The club suspended dues and things for people in the military when they were not here, so whenever I came back they charged me dues for that month, which was not very often. And it worked out very nicely, so when the war was over, I came back. I was on Treasure Island for two years, and used the club then quite a bit, at which time I became a military member.

Jacobson: And there were special dues for military members?

Lewis: Yes, yes. I don't know what they were. I can't remember.

Jacobson: When you first came to San Francisco, how did you find out about the University Club?

Lewis: I knew a couple of fellows who were members here, and they said why don't you join it, and so one of them put me up. I was elected.

Jacobson: Were these acquaintances of yours from Shell Oil Company or just--?

Lewis: No, from college.

Jacobson: Why did you decide to become a member?

Lewis: Because it's a nice place to be. [laughs] A lot of nice guys, and they had all kinds of good food and drinks and everything. It was very pleasant.

Club Living Accommodations

Lewis: I lived here for a while after I joined. In this room I lived for about a year. [laughs]

Jacobson: The rooms must have changed quite a bit from then.

Lewis: They've all been remodeled, yes. They're much better than they were then. They were really crummy.

Jacobson: What were they like?

Lewis: Well, just stained, and tiles were loose, and leaky plumbing, and you know, it wasn't too good. It's all been refurbished now. It's very nice.

Jacobson: Oh, yes. So the use of the rooms was sort of a boarding-type arrangement, I take it?

Lewis: Oh, yes. We had meals here. I lived here two or three times and it was very pleasant.

Jacobson: Other than the thirties, when else were you living here?

Lewis: Well, in the thirties, not after that. But every now and then I'd spend a night here, which is very pleasant. Sometimes I'd spend the night up at the Pacific Union Club, too, but this is just as good.

#### Club Life in the Thirties

Jacobson: What was the atmosphere of the club like in the thirties?

Lewis: Well, I would say it was friendly, pleasant, noisy. It was nice. A lot of nice people.

Jacobson: I've heard it was quite a lively place at times.

Lewis: Yes, it was. We'd play squash and then go up in the bar, and have a couple of drinks, either have dinner here or go out some place for dinner. There was always somebody around.

Jacobson: How often would you use the club when you came, when you were in San Francisco to use it on a more regular basis?

Lewis: Well, a couple of times a week maybe. I don't know. I don't remember. It was very handy.

Jacobson: Did you use it more for lunch or dinner or both?

Lewis: Now I have lunch here once a week and play dominoes upstairs. I don't use it as much now, but I could, I guess, if I came to town. I live way out in Nicasio, you know, so it isn't too easy to come in here all the time.

Jacobson: Would you bring guests to the club?

Lewis: Sometimes. For dinner sometimes. If we were going to the theater, my wife and I would have dinner here, and go by cable car to the theater. It was very handy.

Jacobson: You were a member during the Depression years. I was curious if that had any effect on the club?

Lewis: Well, I don't know. Nineteen thirty-four I joined it. That was after the Depression.

Jacobson: It was still going on a little bit.

Lewis: A little, yes. Well, the club was financially having problems but they finally worked them out. It didn't seem to affect the membership too much.

Jacobson: Still was a lively place to be during that time?

Lewis: Very pleasant.

#### Club Activities

Jacobson: What kind of activities went on in the thirties in the club?

Lewis: Mostly squash and you know, games and dominoes and stuff like that. It was nothing special. We did have a play one time, a production in about 1940. It was called the Shambles. It's written up in the club book someplace. I don't know where. I haven't seen it, but I was in it.

Jacobson: Oh, you were in the show? What did you do?

Lewis: I was the shambolier. I sang a song and danced around a little bit. Nothing special.

It was fun. We had rehearsals and everything. The whole top floor was set up. One end of it was the stage, and everybody else sat out in the main part. It was pretty good fun.

Jacobson: Was there a lot of preparation that went into the Shambles?

Lewis: I don't know. A couple of weeks, maybe a month. I don't remember how long it took. A member named Jim Paramore, who is long gone, wrote the music.

### Impact of World War II on Membership

Jacobson: What happened in World War II, when a lot of the club members went away? What did the club do to accommodate all the members who were in the service?

Lewis: Well, they made them military members and encouraged them to come back when they were around. I don't know what else they did, because I wasn't here that much. But they kept our membership up.

Jacobson: Did making them military members mean suspending dues entirely or just reducing them?

Lewis: Both. When you weren't here, they were suspended. But the dues for military members were lower than the regular membership to begin with. I don't know how much they were. I can't remember, but they were reasonable.

Jacobson: When you returned to the club in the mid-forties or fifties, what was it like in that period?

Lewis: It was just like it used to be, except there were not so many younger people around. A lot of them had moved into other clubs, and didn't come here as much. It was sort of a hard core of old friends around here. I even moved into another club, so I use both of them now.

Jacobson: Which club was this?

Lewis: The Pacific Union Club.

Jacobson: What would you say makes the University Club different from some of the other private men's clubs like Pacific Union Club?

Lewis: Well, I don't know. It's just a nice atmosphere. They're all nice. I don't think it's that different, but I like it here because I'm used to it, and they've been good to me. I was the president of it at one time. So I kind of got involved in it. They're all nice. You can't compare them, I don't think.

Jacobson: They don't have different atmospheres?

Lewis: Well, a little, but some of them have more expensive dues, and other things are more expensive, but I don't think there's that much difference.

### 830 Powell Street Apartments

Jacobson: You brought up your term as president [1969-70], and you were treasurer too for a while in the late sixties [1968-69]. What do you recall from your presidency as being some of the more important issues?

Lewis: Well, we tried to buy the building next door, Apartment 830, from Mr. Swig. It had eight or nine apartments in it, and it rounded out the property here.

There was a certain amount of opposition from the older fuddy duddy members to doing business with Mr. Swig. So it didn't go through. We started to buy it, and then I cancelled the payments, so we didn't get it. But it would have made a nice piece of property if we could have gotten it. As a result of that we McEnerneyed\* which is a legal term, the alley back here which the city claimed they owned. We had eight of the nine lots back there, so we got them all put in our name here, except the one in back of 830. So we gained all this real estate for 21,000 bucks, which is reasonably economical, but we didn't get the property.

Jacobson: What would you have used the Powell Street apartment for?

Lewis: Well, we could have made more rooms that had apartments in it. We could have rented them to somebody. I don't know. We never got that far, because we didn't get it.

Jacobson: You mentioned some members objecting to dealing with Mr. Swig. What was the story behind that?

Lewis: I guess they didn't like him. I don't know. They didn't trust him. We got along fine, and we had an attorney on the board who knew him very well. We went up together to see him, and we couldn't figure out what was the matter with these people.

Jacobson: What was the nature of the agreement with Mr. Swig?

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\*The McEnerney Act reestablished land titles in San Francisco after the earthquake and fire in 1906.



Lewis: We were going to try and buy the property, and add it to this piece, but it just didn't work. I don't know why, I mean other than that, except that we couldn't put it over. The membership got all upset about it. That's very sad.

Jacobson: Has the club bought any other neighboring property?

Lewis: No, they own the property across the alley, and they own a building on that little alley across back there, but they've had that for years. They rebuilt the squash courts since I was a member president. But they hadn't bought any more that I know of.

#### Minimum Use Charge

Jacobson: What were some of the other issues that faced the club during your time as president?

Lewis: I don't remember anything serious.

Jacobson: I think I remember in reading over some of the minute books that it was when you were president that the minimum use charge came into being.

Lewis: I don't remember that. A lot of clubs have that now, so much a month. For three months if you don't use the club they charge you. I didn't realize that came in during my tenure, but the clubs have it. They still have it to encourage people to come and use the club, and spend whatever their minimum is, instead of just being charged it. It increased the income for the club. That's what it does.

Jacobson: Did it increase usage as well?

Lewis: I don't remember. I doubt it. Some people just paid it and didn't come, or came when they could, but I don't think they got too much out of it.

#### National Club Managers' Association

Jacobson: Something else I was curious about--it mentioned in the minutes that the University Club resigned its membership in the National Club Managers' Association? How was the University Club affiliated with it?

Lewis: Well, the manager was given a membership in it, and they were supposed to lobby against things like what's going on now, you know, where the city council of San Francisco passed this law that if you don't have minorities and women in the club, you can't have a club. This is stupid. But they were supposed to lobby for tax breaks, and organizations against the unions, and all this--not against them, but to negotiate with them. So it just seemed like a good idea to have them all together.

Jacobson: Do you remember why the club resigned its membership?

Lewis: I didn't know they had. It probably didn't do much good.

### Club Managers

Jacobson: While we're on the subject of club managers, do you recall John Schaeffer?

Lewis: Oh yes, he was here. He was quite a guy--an angle-maker. Well, he was quite a politician, I guess. But he built the room downstairs, that wine cellar, which everybody thought would be a big boondoggle, but it turned out to be pretty good. They used it a lot--had big lunches down there, and all that. So he did some good things, but, I don't know, I think he died. He hasn't been here for quite a while.

There was another member manager between him and Elder, who's here now--Patrick Jones, his name was. He went to Denver--got an offer for that, so he took it.

Jacobson: What kind of club manager was he?

Lewis: Well, he was pretty good. I think Elder's much better. I don't know, I didn't have too much to do with him. I think he came after I left office, so I just became a regular member. But he was all right. I think there's a certain amount of skullduggery that goes on with the suppliers, so that maybe the manager has been rumored to get a cut on these things. I don't know whether they do or not. I never checked on it.

Committees

Jacobson: What about some committees. Were you on any?

Lewis: No. They just take the load off the officers--you know, do the leg work. There's the Membership, House Committee, Wine Committee. All those committees supposedly have experts on them--the Wine Committee, in particular, to select the wines that are going to be served. I think they're very useful, and they give other members a chance to participate in the club, too.

Admission of Women as Guests

Jacobson: Going back to the minutes book, I was reading--I guess this was also during your tenure as president, or maybe it was when you were treasurer--that the club amended its by-laws to allow women on the premises for lunches in the basement. Do you remember having discussions about that?

Lewis: No, I don't. I think they've done it. I didn't know it happened during my time, but I think it's a good idea. A lot of them come. I can bring my wife here now, for dinner or lunch. And I think it's fine, but I don't want it to go any further than that.

Jacobson: There was, and I don't know whether you'll recall anything about this, but there was apparently a letter from one of the wives suggesting that wives be allowed in the facilities for dinner without having their husbands there.

Lewis: I don't remember that one. I don't think that went over.

Jacobson: No, I don't think it did.

Changes in the Club's Functions and Activities

Jacobson: What would you say have been the biggest changes in the club's functions or activities over the years since you've been a member?

Lewis: Well, I don't know. There haven't been too many. They have a dominos tournament every year, which is very popular, and I won it one year. They have dances and things now, which they didn't use to have. I've never been to one of them. It's too far to come in and out from Nicasio, but I think they're pretty well attended, and they seem to drum up enthusiasm. Other than that I don't know of anything special.

Jacobson: Would you say that the younger members who are coming in now have changed the atmosphere of the club at all from how it was when you first joined in 1930?

Lewis: It's hard for me to say, because I don't know many of them. I just know some of the older ones now, and I don't meet the younger ones very often. So I would say probably they don't change it much. I don't think they use it as much as we used to.

Jacobson: How is the club being used? Is it being used in a different way, would you say, from how it was used in the thirties and forties?

Lewis: No, I don't think so.

Jacobson: Just not as much?

Lewis: Just less people coming in and out, at night particularly, as far as I know. I just hear this. I don't come very often at night. But I don't think some of younger people are really using it the way we used to. They don't live here or play games as much. That's just my impression. I don't know if it's accurate or not.

Jacobson: I've heard that that's the case. Would you say there are any overriding club values that transcend differences among the members like age, or professional interests?

Lewis: I don't think the age affects that, except that they don't get to meet each other as much. No, I would not say that has any significant effect on it.

#### Old-Timers

Jacobson: I'm wondering if you could tell me a little bit about the members that you sort of spent time with as a member of the club. Who were some of those members in the club?

Lewis: This fellow, Jim Paramore was one of them.

Jacobson: What was Jim Paramore's contribution to the club?

Lewis: He wrote music, and wrote verse. I think his brother, Ted, wrote that thing about Alaska, you know--I can't think of the name.\* But he was quite talented. I can't think of any other members' names now. If I had a book here with old members in it, I might be able to tell you. But there are a certain number of people that used to come here every afternoon at five o'clock or so. In fact, I got a commission in the regular Navy through one of these members who had a friend who was on the selection board for reserves and the regular Navy. He was here one day, and I came in, and we met. He was a flyer, too. And then all of a sudden I got selected into the regular Navy. The guy who was in the Navy was Admiral Gerald Bogan. He finally retired as a vice admiral. He was a lieutenant commander at this time, and was on the selection board for reserve officers into the regular Navy. So I was pretty happy.

Jacobson: Oh yes, I should say. Did you ever sit at the Round Table?

Lewis: Always.

Jacobson: What was that like?

Lewis: Just a lot of chat, stories, jokes, rolling dice for drinks. It was quite fun.

#### Future of Private Men's Clubs

Jacobson: Let me ask you for your comments on the future of private clubs now that the San Francisco ordinance has been signed. Do you think that represents a threat to the University Club?

Lewis: Well, it's an unconstitutional law for one thing, so I don't think it'll hold, and I don't think it's going to affect the club much, because they don't permit renting rooms to non-members. They don't do anything that's specified in that law. It's a real stupid law in my mind.

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\*The Ballad of Yukon Jake



Lewis: There's no reason why people can't join together and have a private organization. Absolutely none. They can't tell you who you can have in your home, and they can't tell you who you can have here. So I don't think it's going to stick, but it's messy while it's going on.

Jacobson: It certainly is.

What is it about the all-male nature of the club that's so important to the members?

Lewis: Well, you don't have to watch your language for one thing [chuckles], and you have a lot more freedom in running around in bathrooms, and exercise places. It's just less restrictive. Makes it pleasanter.

Jacobson: Were you a big squash player while you were here?

Lewis: I played a lot of squash, yes. Not very good squash, but I played.

Jacobson: Would you play with members, or bring guests?

Lewis: Both. Mostly members, but every now and then I'd bring a guest.

#### Club's Value

Jacobson: As sort of a wrap-up question, what would you say has made the club valuable to you?

Lewis: Well, it has a nice atmosphere, and I've made a lot of friends. You could do things you wanted here. This is just a nice place to be, instead of sitting in a restaurant downtown or fighting lines waiting to get served. It's just a much nicer atmosphere, in my opinion.

They made me an honorary member here about four years ago after being a member fifty years.

Jacobson: Wonderful. Congratulations.

Lewis: So that's pretty nice. Can't complain about that.

Jacobson: Thank you very much for this interview.

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Robert Morris

The University Club of San Francisco:  
One Hundred Years of Tradition and Change

An Interview Conducted by  
Lisa Jacobson



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## ROBERT MORRIS

Born in Philadelphia in 1949, Robert Morris received his bachelor's degree from the University of Denver in 1972 and his M.B.A. from the American Graduate School of International Management in 1975. That same year he moved to San Francisco, where he began a career in international banking. He joined the University Club in 1981 and served as Entertainment Committee chairman in 1986-87.

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name Frederick T. Morris

Date of birth 11/29/49 Birthplace Philadelphia, PA

Father's full name Edwin B Morris III

Occupation PRESIDENT, HXL Birthplace Philadelphia, PA

Mother's full name MARY H MORRIS

Occupation HOUSEWIFE Birthplace Philadelphia, PA

Your spouse Mary Windsor Stockwell MORRIS

Your children Mary Windsor Morris  
CAROL THORNTON MORRIS

Where did you grow up? Philadelphia

Present community Montclair

Education B.A. University of Denver, CO. May 1971  
MBA: American Graduate School of International Management

Occupation(s) FINANCE

Areas of expertise Banking, Leasing, Corporate Finance

Other interests or activities Sports, Music, Computers  
SKing, Squash, Mountain Running,  
Swim camping

Organizations in which you are active Indian Guides, Indian  
Princesses



## I THE UNIVERSITY CLUB

### Background

[Date of Interview: 14 December 1987]##

Jacobson: Well, what I usually like to do is start with a little bit of background information.

Morris: Okay.

Jacobson: Tell me a little bit about when you were born and your education.

Morris: Yes. I was born in 1949 in Philadelphia, and grew up through high school in the Philadelphia area. From a club point of view, my family had been members of the Union League in Philadelphia as well as the Penn Athletic Club, which were great old clubs back then and one of the reasons I was very interested in the University Club here. I received my undergraduate education in Colorado at the University of Denver through 1972, and then I went back for a masters in business at the American Graduate School of International Management in Phoenix, Arizona. Then thereafter, by design, moved to San Francisco, like so many of us transplants out here.

### Childhood Memories of Private Men's Clubs

Jacobson: What were the clubs like back in Philadelphia? You mentioned the Union League and--

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##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes, see pages 276-77.



Morris: Right. The Union League--I'm not sure how accurate my information is on it, but I think it was the oldest Republican Party-oriented club in United States. My grandfather was a member, and my father was a member. It was a great old men's club. They'd bring even us little kids to formal Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners; they were dinner dances with big orchestras. It was wonderful and charming, with lovely rooms.

The Penn Athletic Club was also a men's club. At that time it was located on Rittenhouse Square, and it was a wonderful place. We'd go there before the Penn football games on Saturday (my parents both went to Penn), before the Philadelphia Eagles on Sunday, the Mummer's Day Parade (a Philadelphia extravaganza), and the Easter parade.

#### Reasons for Joining the University Club

Jacobson: Did your exposure to those clubs as a kid inspire you to seek out a men's club as an adult?

Morris: Yes, it was a natural transition towards this particular club. When you transplant to a city, there are some clubs you can and cannot get into typically. The Olympic Club would take anybody, and it seemed like a big gymnasium of macho types of guys, and more like a YMCA than the University Club. So I bided my time and got to know enough people in the University Club. Finally I fell upon Paul A. M. Robinson, as he's known throughout San Francisco, who had been a friend of my wife's as well. I initially met him when I was a trainee at Wells Fargo Bank. He seems to take every young man in the city under his wing, and kind of makes sure they're pointed in the right direction. He's kind of a one-man rush team for the University Club.

I also thought I'd like to learn to play squash because it's a fast-moving game that gives you a good cardiovascular workout within in a short period of time. The people that I knew that were University Club members were young enough so that I didn't have to sit and watch the entire membership die off--a comment sometimes made of another men's club in town. But it also had a certain amount of protocol which I felt very comfortable with. The library, in particular, was a room I loved. My grandfather had a library, not as large or as broad-based as the one we have here, but it really made me feel like I was at home.

Jacobson: So was the University Club then your first exposure to squash?

Morris: Yes, I had never played squash before, and I just felt that from a timing point of view--I get up in the morning and run at six o'clock, and in the winter months particularly when it's dark, I'm not the most adept person at staying on my feet. I've had half a dozen running injuries over the years, because it's dark or raining or something ridiculous, so I find squash at the noon hour or early in the morning less hazardous; at least it's light on the courts. You can get a great workout quickly and still have a full day for business.

Jacobson: Do you play with other club members, or do you bring a guest to the court?

Morris: One fellow I play with is a fellow who I met my first day at college who followed me to graduate school and then out here. We've kept up very closely over the years, and he is not a member of the club. He lives up in Sonoma, and he will drive all the way from Sonoma to come down to play squash. Unfortunately, he's not a clubby person, not a joiner, and I've always accepted that premise. But he likes to play the game, so we play regularly. Another fellow who I sponsored into the club, Pete Smith, plays squash with me once a week. He went to Harvard and played quite a bit in school.

#### Recruitment by Paul A. M. Robinson

Jacobson: I'm interested in finding out more about how you came to be a member of the club. You mentioned Paul A.M. Robinson, that he sort of took you under his wing. Tell me about him.

Morris: Paul, as I mentioned, is the type of guy who just took care of every transplanted individual he liked. There was a whole group from Wells that he'd take out for drinks after work, and he helped furnish my apartment, and just did wonderful things. When Missie and I got married, we went off to Toronto for a year and came back. He again helped furnish our apartment. I think he owns a bunch of properties around town somehow, because he has a lot of keys, and you pick them up at his house, and then you just follow him through alleys around all these old Victorian houses into basements. He has got a piece of furniture here, and a piece of furniture there, all over the place. He just talks a mile a minute and is an absolute first-class character.

Paul, little by little, kind of mentioned the club, and brought me up here for lunch a couple times, and basically said, "You're ready. You should join. Who else in the club do you know?" And so he'd go through the process of trying to figure out who you knew to go through the application process.

East Coast Spirit of the Club

Morris: I felt very comfortable with the club: its physical plan, people that I did know, and the types of activities and everything—I just felt very much at home. For a lot of us from the East Coast there's some things we miss. (There's some things we don't miss either, like the humidity, and having to work in snow. I'd rather drive to it at my pleasure, which we can do here.) Something you miss is part of that culture, and what I've said to several other people who I've co-sponsored into the club is, to me it's kind of an extension of being at home and what I left back in Philadelphia. My family's been there for about three hundred years, and I'm the only one who moved west. So it makes me feel that I can be at home without having to fly three thousand miles, or live back in that awful weather.

Jacobson: What is it specifically about the East Coast that the University Club recreates for you?

Morris: It reminds me a lot of the Union League Club. I think my memory's jaded from many years, but it's a tradition of somewhat formalized rooms, and it's a men's club that just—it reminds me of the Union League Club. I guess everybody thinks California, you know, we have all these nuts out here and everything else, which clearly we have more than our share, but it doesn't mean you still can't be conservative and have a nice, quiet, relaxing atmosphere to have lunch, dinner, or whatever. It also reminds me of my grandparents' home and finely cultured way of life.

Importance of Male Companionship to Members

Jacobson: Do you think that those are the qualities that draw young men of your generation to a private men's club such as the University Club?

Morris: I think everybody joins for their own reasons, but I think that's part of the equation for most people. This fellow, Bart Wells—I wrote a letter on his behalf—I think he feels very strongly about male companionship. And obviously in this town you can take that a lot different ways, but you take Boy Scouts, or fraternities, or whatever, there's some things that people like to do with different groups of people. I guess I go back to basic psychology and say that everyone's built a little different as far as how much time they need by themselves, with their spouse, with male friends, female friends, small groups, and large groups. You can make a thousand different combinations to determine what makes every one tick. You take a loner—he



Morris: probably wants to be alone 90 percent of the time. You take other people who are extroverts and want to be with large groups only--they want to go to the sporting games all the time.

Well, everybody is a little different. I like having camaraderie with other male members, and talking with them whether it's about duck shooting, or fly fishing, or great old stories with Chauncey McKeever at the Friday afternoon round table. They're a wonderful group of people, and it's just a lot of fun. I've always loved older men for their wisdom and stories; there's a lot to say when you're seventy or eighty years old. They've lived a lot more than some of us younger people.

But we have a balance here. You take the P.U. Club, and I think the average age must be about eighty-five. Here we have the young, let's say, spirited people, so you can go and have a dinner dance like we had Friday night, and it was a lot of fun. We put a table together with some young people and older people, and it was a lot of fun to get the whole mix. I like that camaraderie, and sure, with their wives, which obviously made for a successful dinner dance.

#### Mixing Among Younger and Older Members

Jacobson: It sounds like there's a real mixing among the different age groups at the club. Would you say that is true?

Morris: I would suggest much more so than a lot of other clubs. Again the P.U. Club--they're mostly older people. I'd say in my age bracket I know maybe three people, and they may be the only three people under sixty there. I say that with some facetiousness, of course.

Jacobson: Are you a member of the P.U. Club?

Morris: No, I'm not. But I don't know that it would be very interesting from my point of view to be with all older men, whereas here we have a nice mix. I've chaired the Entertainment Committee for two years, and I try to draw new members into it. By getting some rotation of people, you get fresh ideas. But it also helps to have Bob Sibley sit in on the meetings and say, "Well, we tried that idea in 1975, and it was a flop, and this is the reason why." Then a newer member can say, "Well, Bob, it may have flopped then, but we've had a turnover of membership, or maybe it was the way it was presented, maybe it was the market, maybe it was the event itself; but let's at least not just throw it out." By the same token we take it as wisdom that he brings to it as far as what has worked and what hasn't worked. So you

Morris: kind of blend it all together. So yes, I think in the case of Bart Wells, or Pete Smith, the fellow who I just sponsored, they like the mix of ages and fellowship of men.

### Lunchtime Groupings

Jacobson: Another thing that this brings up is if I were to come to the club at lunchtime and look at the tables, would I see people sitting with different people every time or do people tend to group together by interest or professions or age or--

Morris: I think it's interesting that again everybody joins it for different reasons. And I have no doubt that some people use a club for business purposes. You know, everybody goes into shock--they think, well, we don't use it except as a social club. I'm sure there are people who do it. Other people never do.

At the fourth floor bar you will see a lot of the same faces day in, day out who will all sit at the club table. It's something we came up with in our committee a couple years ago, where the primary objective of mine was and still is to enhance the fellowship of the members with each other. And by having this club table where we offer free wine from twelve to two, it was kind of a pull-in type of thing. It's worked quite effectively, particularly this whole Friday afternoon round table, which evolved from that premise. If nothing else, having chaired this committee for two years, I am extremely pleased to see that fellowship where it wasn't before.

This room [the third floor dining room], during lunch hour particularly fills with people who have made it a point to come up and get together. If people are coming up just to kind of fill in for lunch, we have a club table over here, which can be used in that capacity. If I'm coming up by myself, I'll go to the fourth floor bar, because I love the room and now, the group frequents it. It's quiet and comfortable, and it's a men's-only room for that time.

Getting back to it, I think men act differently where there are only men around. I think women do, too, to some degree. And everyone's different, too. Some people may react less differently, and some more so, around the other gender. I don't know that I react differently, as much as I like that kind of environment where it's quiet, and you can sit and read the newspaper while having lunch or whatever. A lot of people will dine by themselves by design if they just want to relax and have some quiet time. With this room I think you get more of the



Morris: people who are having possibly business lunches, or social lunches, and it's much more of a mix. There's a lot of turnover. It's not as static as the fourth floor bar area.

#### Fourth Floor Bar and Round Table

Jacobson: Does the fourth floor bar area draw regulars?

Morris: Yes. I think of this Round Table group, as I've grown to call it over the years, as a Frank King Commemorative Table. Frank kind of is the ex-officio standing member there, who takes care and makes sure everybody meets each other. Although it does have some rotating chairs, I'd say there must be, oh, half a dozen to a dozen people who would try with every bit of enthusiasm to make it every Friday, because it has built this fellowship which is again, I think, the key to what we are trying to achieve.

Jacobson: What kind of things are discussed up in the fourth floor bar?

Morris: Well, I can say one thing. First, in the many, many lunches I've had there, I don't think there's ever been one word of business from a specific deal type of thing. You may talk about the stock market crash from a more general point of view, but I've never seen anybody try to transact business or anything of this sort. I think the most telling thing to support this statement is, of all the lunches I've had there, and with anywhere from ten to twenty-five people who may sit up there on Friday afternoon, I can't say what any of them do as a profession. I don't know what any of them do. I know Frank King was in banking and he's retired, and Chauncey McKeever was an attorney, and he's retired, and I'm certainly not doing business with retired people. I don't know what any of them do. I don't do it by design, it's just that it's the code of the club. I'd say as a group it's nothing that we try to police; it's just a known commodity as much as getting up and shaving in the morning.

Topics include Mike Ryan (who has been very helpful on my committee) telling some nuances on duck hunting, or Dolph Senacac talking about fly fishing, or somebody who just got back from someplace or other with their wife telling you a great story about how to get around Beijing by cab or whatever. I would say a lot of times, the issues are things that perhaps they don't discuss anywhere else; they're not something they would talk to their wife about, not to say it's taboo or anything else, but they feel more comfortable talking to a bunch of men. And I don't think we act as divorce counselors, or anything else as a group, but actually, once in a while, somebody brings something up. I know Billy Britton, who unfortunately is no

longer a member, went on this Children's Hospital diet, and he lost over a hundred pounds and has kept it off. And over the course of dining with Billy here, I got enough information from Bill that my wife went on this same diet because she had a weight problem and lost a lot of weight and kept it off. And that's a very salient detail of something very valuable for my wife that came out of it. I tend to think of it as a more mature, older fraternity, which you aren't just through with in four years, but you can have for the rest of your life with a group of great people. You don't have to go out and try to glad hand people. You're not trying to cut a deal, trying to make things fall into a short period of time, but it's something where you can little by little really build a long-term, warm relationship with some very nice people.

### Fraternities and Men's Clubs

Jacobson: You touched on something that I wanted to ask you about which was to what extent the fraternity parallels men's clubs.

Morris: I was a Lambda Chi in college, and I had not gone to private boys' schools at all. I wasn't even a Boy Scout for that matter. But it's funny. When I was looking at houses during rush when I was a freshman, the fellow who became my pledge father said, "You will obtain relationships out of this fraternity that you'll keep for the rest for of your life." I said, "Geez, I'm eighteen years old. I think you're overstating this a little, Chris." And believe it or not I still keep up with probably twenty people from my fraternity. We went skiing in Vail with a couple of fraternity brothers and their wives last March.

I guess you can say liquor isn't as important in our club as it was in college. It's more mature. The relationships are bred over a longer period of time. But it's not as intense as far as living with these people, and going to school with them. This is a much slower cookery, if you will, of getting that relationship, but I think the end result is somewhat the same in that you get long-term, bonding relationships.

Jacobson: How would you characterize the atmosphere of the fourth floor bar? Is it at all rowdy? Is it calm discussions?

Morris: It's a group of gentlemen, I think, is the best way to say it, that sure sometimes there's some good dirty jokes told, which there are a couple that I would not repeat, but were hysterical, and told in a way that I can't tell jokes. But aside from that it's a very pleasant, not whispers, but I'd say about at the same conversation level as we're talking now--a group of people, where

Morris: we have one big round table, and then as more people come, we put a long rectangular table at one end, and then at the other end if we need it.

Issues just evolve. Clearly right now the women's issue is at the forefront of things, and a lot of these fellows are very concerned for different reasons, some less, and some not concerned at all also. But it's something where you can have open debate on any topic, and I would suggest that the group is very much on the conservative side, because most of them are older members, which I guess we tend to get more conservative as we get older. But still, it's not that anyone doesn't have an equal voice to be able to express their view on any topic. I'd say it's done in not informal protocol by any means, Lisa, but two people aren't talking at once unless we again get this very large group. Then there may be a topic down here at the far end of the table. But it's done in a civilized way.

#### Issues Raised by San Francisco Club Ordinance

Jacobson: Has the ordinance requiring admission of women to the club been a topic of discussion?

Morris: Yes, it certainly has. I guess I'm opposed to having women in the club. My mother-in-law, my grandmother-in-law are members of the Town and Country Club, and I think it's wonderful. There isn't any place I'd rather be taken to lunch in town. Their sundaes are lovely, and I just think of this wonderful group of women, and what they have in common, whatever that fabric is. To say that they have to put men in there, I think it would hurt them even moreso than us. And I think that's wrong. I don't think we have to all be a homogenous group. I don't think we have to go the bathroom together or shower together. I tend to think that people confuse discrimination with homogeneity; I think you can have people getting together in small groups without discriminating per se.

If you look at the number of clubs in San Francisco proper you can find a club for any interest under the sun. And some of them are very easy to define--a dominos club, where they play dominos, or a ski club, or whatever. But when you get into a men's club, it's not as easy to articulate what that fabric is, because as we try to parallel it with a fraternity, or coming from a Boy Scout group, there are some things that men like to do more with each other than with women. Certainly I love women a lot, and there are some things that I'd rather do with women than men too. But to say that I can't have that time with men, I think is taking away part of that little section of my life that



Morris: makes me who I am. On the other hand, if you said we could only have men's clubs and we can't have women's clubs or mixed clubs, I would say that would be gross discrimination. I would be opposed to that and fight for having clubs of all types.

We have clubs of all types, and to say that you cannot have clubs by certain types, I think is gross discrimination. This ordinance says that you're a non-private club if you're over four hundred. That's an arbitrary figure trying to force opening these clubs up. I think if they're going to have an ordinance, they have to say that to all clubs. To say only clubs over four hundred is arbitrary and is discrimination. I'm opposed to that.

The sense I get is that there are some women in City Hall who think that they're missing out on business opportunities. I think that's a real key issue. I can't say that I have made any business relationships from this club. I've made some warm social relationships. I'm sure some some people have made business relationships. And okay, that's fine. But I don't think that's the real fabric of our club, nor the Bohemian Club, nor the P.U. Club, nor the Town and Country. I don't think that's really what's going on here. When our club was closed this past summer, we had our Friday Round Table at the Family Club—every Friday for August, September, and up to when we opened in October. And it's the same atmosphere there.

I tend to sense that people remember back to movies when we were growing up, and we saw the robber barons all closeted in a panelled room smoking cigars, trying to decide who's going to own the Union Pacific and this and that. Well, that's a figment of people's imagination in this day and age. I just don't think business is transacted that way. I think during lunch hour there are people who use this for business purposes. Fine. But I don't find that that's particularly discriminatory, because they invite women, and they transact business indiscriminately with their male and female guests. And sure it happens to fall within our social club walls, but they could have that anywhere. It's not like they're saying we will not let women in on these meetings. I think it's much ado about nothing on the parts of these people who feel they're missing out on something. But at the same time I think they may be destroying a segment of our society which has its place.

I wrote Dianne Feinstein a letter on it. Unfortunately I got back the form letter 101 or 102 or whatever it was, which didn't address the issues. I think that trying to do this at a time when this is being tested in the Supreme Court is particularly in poor taste, because if they can force us to allow women between now and the Supreme Court decision, clearly you can't go back. I would be opposed to going back once you've made that decision, but if they're trying to regulate it, they're

Morris: going to cost the city a lot of money, and I don't think the people of San Francisco want to pay revenue to fighting an ordinance which is being tested in the Supreme Court. I think that it is grossly unfair to use their hard-earned money when the constitutionality is being questioned.

##

They aren't trying to do what's right. I think they're emotionally involved with it. If they're trying to do what's right they should let the Supreme Court decide what's right, and then abide accordingly. If the Supreme Court says we must have women in these clubs and these ordinances are fair, so be it. I will abide by and support that ruling. That's terrific. But instead we have this group of people trying to use this hiatus to shove this at us when they aren't trying to get to what's right or wrong. They're emotionally, vindictively, or whatever it might be, trying to be crusaders.

#### Various Opinions on Ordinance within Membership

Jacobson: Do you have any sense of whether younger members are less opposed to the idea of opening up the club than older members? Is there any sort of breakdown by age?

Morris: I'm writing a survey. I've had the House Committee review it and everything, and we'll probably send it out at the end of the month. The women's issue was left out by design because it's an inflammatory issue.

As far as trying the best we can to get the breakdown, I'd say generally the older members would be opposed, and the younger members would be, let's say, less opposed.

I think the breakdown, though, runs perhaps more across other demographic variables having to do with why they use the club. If they use it as a social club for fellowship with men, I think they'd be opposed. If they're using it as a business club, and if their firm is paying for it--which mine doesn't--and they have partners who are ladies who say, "Why are we paying for your bill there?"--I think those members are maybe in the position of being in favor of having women. Then there's a group of people who don't know what they believe, and they will go with the flow, which is I think typical in any election or issue of any sort. Unfortunately, some are being swayed by crusaders preaching inaccurate information to further their view.

Going back to Dianne Feinstein's response to me: She said, "It's an idea whose time has come." Well, I thought about that



Morris: long and hard. What does it mean that an idea's time has come? I think it's probably one of the least meaningful cliches I've ever heard--to say the idea has suddenly come. Well, I think it's kind of cheap semantics.

What I'm more concerned about is because the city's trying to fence us in, a lot of people are going to say, "Ah, it's going to happen; we may as well vote for it." Unfortunately, the judge has turned down the Bohemian Club's injunction, trying to stave off the ordinance. If we can't get an appeal by Friday the 18th, then we have to do something about it. And that's a short period to say you're going to change the fabric of something that's been around for a hundred years. I think that's pretty terrible.

We're going to vote on the issue in January, and I'd rather see us do this in an orderly fashion, because we're changing for a lot of people how part of their life is conducted. Let's let the Supreme Court make the decision first as far as what is acceptable within our country. And then, after you get a clear picture of what the legal situation is, then let's ask our members, assuming that they don't say you must have women. Then it doesn't matter how we vote. It's a done issue. But if they say, "No you can go on having a social club with whomever you want," then I think that group that isn't sure which way they want to go perhaps will say, "Well, now I can decide on the issue, instead of on the fluff around the issue of, I've got to do it. Now I can say, 'Is this what I want?'" Then they can vote with a clear mind as to whether they want women or not. But that's obviously not what's going to happen depending on the appeals process, but aside from that, we're voting anyway. And so be it. That was a board of director's decision, and I respect their wisdom as well.

Jacobson: Did the idea of the survey originate with wanting to find out members' opinions on this issue?

Morris: No, the whole thing stemmed from my Entertainment Committee, which tried to put on a St. Patty's Day party last year. We put one on two years ago. It wasn't as well attended as we wanted, but I'm somewhat financially oriented, and I'd say, "If we don't get so many people to sign up by such-and-such a date, this is a downside cost, and I won't have a huge loss at other members' expense for a small group." So we cancelled the last few. The new members' dinner dance was not as much of a success as the year before. And we said, "Well, who are our members? What do they want?" And so from that I drafted up the survey.

I've had the House Committee look at it. Because the women's issue was such a hot item, which we have a separate committee reviewing, they felt to put it in the survey might materially change where the committee was going. Well, whether

Morris: it's a right decision or not, I respect their decision, but they felt that, "Yes, let's send out a survey, but let's isolate that issue because it's such a hot issue." And I think the way they're going to put out a ballot (having kind of a California ballot issue, where you have the pros and cons on both sides) is, if they're going to do it, probably the right way to do it. But we will still put out a survey to try to find out what our membership wants.

On the other hand, I think I'd rather wait until we finish voting on this issue, so I know who our members are and might be. If we are going to have women in the club, perhaps the way people answer these questions will be very different than if it's going to be a male-only club. So I'd rather get good information so I can figure out what kind of events we want to put on in 1988.

Jacobson: Will you want to continue your membership if it comes to pass that women are admitted?

Morris: I guess Murray Fox and I were talking, and he said, "I'm not going to jump off the Golden Gate Bridge." And I said, "No, I'm not going to jump off the Golden Gate Bridge either." I still like the facility and membership. And to allow women in here, I guess some of the people in favor said, "Look we can invite women for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. They can use the squash courts. What can't they do? And why don't they pay?" That's one point of view. And I said, "Well, I can't answer that question. It's a good point." I think it's a very good point. But I don't know, the way it is now we have our fourth floor, and we still can decide where women can go and not go. I'm not saying we're control mongers per se, but we want to have that peace and quiet in areas that we've selected. However, the Jonathan Club of Los Angeles voted to admit women and they had the L.A. City Council force it to integrate the men's and women's grills. No member, male or female, had requested the change. It begs the question what rights any club has with legislators like that.

Jacobson: Do you think you'll have women knocking down the door to get in?

Morris: Well, I think other people have said quite a few times, "Unfortunately, some of the women who might be knocking down the door are the types that the women's clubs wouldn't like to have as members either, or a lot of the clubs wouldn't like." I think the thing that could really happen that could be very difficult is once you say you're going to have women, you'll have a quota system, perhaps regulated by City Hall. You may also have to re-establish waiting lists to allow for this quota system. I'm six years from getting into the Bohemian Club. But if they say that they have to have fifty women in first, I'd probably never get in. I'd say, "That's reverse discrimination." And something should be done about that.



Morris: I believe in equality 100 percent. I really do. And women have a right to have a club. Men have a right to have a club. The Hindus from Omaha, Nebraska living in Chico, California have a right to have a club. But to force you to open it up to anybody for any reason, I'm concerned that that could lead to saying, if I have some business people at my house for dinner, that I have to let every street person into my house, too. Where does it end?

Yes, I don't think I'm going to resign over it, but it's actually interesting to hear other people's points of view. There are some people who for better or for worse said, "I will resign if women are allowed in this club." And I think some of them have put themselves in a box by being so adamant about it that they can't sit back and reflect saying, "How much is this really going to change it?" In other words, let's open up a ladies' lounge, and let them have a ladies' lounge, and a men's lounge, or whatever. You might still have your little secluded area perhaps. Maybe not.

I know the Yale Club in New York, when they voted to allow women--which is a much different situation because the Yale Club is for Yale alumni; well, there are women alumni, they should have women. But the men had to finally put on bathing suits so the women could use the swimming pool. Well, I agree that they should put on bathing suits, and they should have women members for a co-ed college-oriented program. They've got to; but the membership lost some of its tradition in the transition.

I'm very disappointed that some members are so adamantly stating that they will resign. I think they're very fine members who have made great contributions to the club, and we're going to lose them. There are other people who are waiting to see, and there are some other people who said that their wives are going to make them resign if they have women in the club. I've tried to feel through that issue and say, "If we allow women, what do you think they're going to do in here?" I don't think it's going to change the way people eat lunch, or use the bedrooms, but, I don't know. But we're going to lose some invaluable members, who have told me several times over quite a few months that they will have to resign, because their wives are insisting on it. That's also a tangible loss that we will have to face. How many people that is, is a real tough one. And, of course, the people in favor of the issues say we'll make it up with women members. Of course, that makes some people feel even worse. It's a no win. (The Concordia Club that has allowed women membership for six months has only two female members to date; two daughters of one member.)

On the other hand, I wonder how many people will really resign. The people in favor of the issue say, "Oh, nobody's going to resign." Well, that's not true either. I bet we'll

Morris: lose five to ten. I think that's probably a real number, but it won't be a hundred, and I don't think it'll be none. I think five, ten, maybe twenty-five at the outside, but I think five or ten's probably realistic.

#### Suggested Alternatives to Mandated Admission of Women

Morris: The women who want to get in--I would much rather see some of the ladies from the Town and Country affiliated with us by putting the two clubs together. Quite a few women's clubs have made overtures to different men's clubs and visa versa, because I guess you feel the type of membership they have would feel a lot more comfortable than some of these, let's say, aggressive women's libber types. I'm not too wild about having dinner with them anywhere, let alone here. They have their rights, but I'd rather get some of the ladies who I think have a little more poise, a little more diplomacy than some of these loud-mouth types of people. There are men that are the same way. I don't want to say they're just women, but I don't want the men of that sort in this club either. It should be an interesting, engaging 1988.

Jacobson: Have there been any discussions of trying to privatize, in other words, foregoing corporate or other outside revenue to meet the criteria of the ordinance?

Morris: Yes. From a financial point of view I would suggest it might be difficult in the long term, assuming the Supreme Court upholds the City ordinance. There is some discussion of saying, "Well, why don't we join with another men's club and not have any outside functions for businesses and the like." You take the Family Club, they have their farm, which is their equivalent to the Bohemian Club Grove. From, let's say, a member profile, I think the members would get along very well. That's the most important element, I guess. However, the financial elements are more difficult. You go through it and say, "Well, we'd still retain two clubhouses, we'd have squash courts, they have their farm, and we'd intermix these people somehow. Financially would it float?" I don't think so. And I think we'd have to sell one clubhouse. They're interested in us having a squash court facility, which they don't have. They find that a very attractive aspect. We think their farm's very attractive.

But I'm not sure you could get the Family Club members to sell their building. It's a lovely building. We've used it immensely--they're a wonderful group of people. But if they would agree to that, which I think is asking them too much, but if they would, the economics would work very well, because you'd

Morris: fill up this place from breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Well, they don't have dinner there except for once every Wednesday of a month or something of that sort. I think then the financial dynamics would work. I don't think they're up to taking that loss of their physical structure.

Jacobson: How closely are the clubs working to fight the ordinance? Sounds like they're in communication with one another.

Morris: I'm not in the mainstream of that activity. I've offered to get more involved, because as I said, I think it really takes something away from our city, and from my life and the other members. I'd say from what I can gather we have not been as actively pursuing some of these alternatives as some of the other clubs. I know the Family has been more aggressive. It's hard to tell. I think the P.U. Club has basically said they're going to privatize. And I think they can afford to do that. They can just say, no outside events, and they'll just make everybody pony up for it.

I don't think it's been a very unified fight, if you want to call it a fight. But I think there's been a fair amount of communication. I think the problem is the clock is ticking faster than any of these things can happen, which I think was also done by intent by City Hall--again, I think, incorrectly.

Jacobson: Were there letter-writing campaigns organized or anything like that to defeat the ordinance?

Morris: Not to any great degree. In the case of my writing to Dianne Feinstein, I felt politically, as well as financially, she made a mistake. For the city she made a mistake in signing the ordinance. I think that she wanted to give her cronies on the board support even though I think she's going to find there's less money that's going to be made available to her running for governor. And there's no reason for it. Let the Supreme Court decide the issue. But it's done.

Jacobson: One last question on this. How does the club vote on such a controversial issue as this? Is there a discussion beforehand and then a vote taken, or is it done--?

Morris: We've had several get-togethers for people to talk about the issues. Everybody's been encouraged to write in on the issues, so the members have had a significant amount of time to at least comment on the issues. The actual amount of commentary has not been that great, which again says how big that ambivalent group is who use it for lunch and don't care what it is particularly. And I'd say that for as much of a hot potato as it is for a lot of members, the commentary has not been that strong.



Morris: The ballot will really be, "Do you want women or not?" It will be very, very easy to read the question with no hidden intangibles in the way it's written. I was very, very strongly advocating that position, because I didn't want something that meanders all over the page like that leaving a goat trail. Again it was proposed, and it was agreed, to have a California-type ballot, having the pros on one side and the cons on the other. The membership has had the time, but we haven't had as much volume of response that we would expect.

### Influence of Younger Members

Jacobson: I wanted to ask you a couple questions about the younger members of the club. Have they changed the atmosphere of the club in any way since you've been a member?

Morris: Yes, I think so. I say I like the older members, but I like the younger members too, because it's a breath of fresh air. I think we have to kind of rotate the membership somewhat. And obviously people die off. They also leave for a myriad of reasons, and you've got to be able to get new members. One young member, Kirk Andrews, who's on my committee, has been very helpful in really spearheading some of the new ideas we've had on the committee. He and I have gone after getting bridge lessons for the spring with a fellow who teaches over at the Town and Country and the Metropolitan Clubs, and is a terrific teacher. Kirk has been very instrumental in doing that.

They're a fun group, too. We put on ski movies on Thursday nights up there, and they come yodelling. They are welcomed by the older members. One of the reasons for this club table was to get more of the old and the young members together, and I think it's been very helpful. We couldn't live without them. They're a great group, and we're always looking for new ones.

Jacobson: Do they use the club in different ways? Do they have a different purpose?

Morris: How they use the facility, I think it's amazing. I think historically you would have seen a lot of people belly up to the bar for a couple of drinks before they go home. You don't see that as much anymore. The fourth floor bar can be dead after work, which I think ten years ago, you'd have fifty people there every night. I think that's part of the health consciousness, people being more sports active, or whatever. And you see people having Coke, or orange juice, or Calistoga a lot more. I hardly ever drink during the day. We see it reflected in the amount of

Morris: revenue we get from liquor versus times of past as far as the total components of our revenue stream. I'd say that you see people having lighter lunches.

### Squash Players and Facilities

Morris: The squash facilities have become a lot more used, partially because of John Lau. John has been a wonderful addition to our club, moreso I think than any of us had originally contemplated. I was clearly in favor of having him. I love playing squash. But he has done marvelous things as far as getting more people active in different programs and having them meet other people.

Jacobson: Who is John Lau?

Morris: John Lau is our squash pro for the University Club. Aside from being one of the best squash players in the country, he is an exceptional teacher. He has a diplomacy of slowly getting people involved without ever pushing. It's a wonderful skill. But to have someone who has that diplomacy, terrific teaching capabilities, and also being a very, very good player--that's a rare set of qualities. He has done wonders for this club, and that has helped a lot of the young members to become acquainted. Even if you're playing one or two guys regularly, like I do, who are not members, you get to know a lot of people down in the locker room just from playing maybe at the same time during the week.

When the Squash Club of San Francisco closed its facilities, we put on a reception for those members to see if they had any interest in joining. John put the whole thing together. We didn't get too many members, but it instilled more fellowship for the University Club membership.

I'd suggest that there has been some bad will between the people who use, let's say, the fourth floor bar, and the people who use the squash facilities--it's a them-and-us type of thing. It's been our goal to try to mitigate that over the last few years. We've done it fairly successfully so that when somebody starts talking about the squash players, some people--those of us who use both facilities a lot--can say, "Well, I play squash." "Oh, you do?" And they're very surprised. "How is it you're here?" And I said, "Well, if you look around the table--you know, he plays squash too." "He does?" And the same thing with the squash players. You say, "Why don't you come up and have lunch?" "Yeah, great idea." Otherwise, they just tend to use the facility and go home.

Morris: It was a hot topic when the facility was first proposed to the club. There's always been some question as to some people who were, let's say, a little devious, slightly anyway, in how they got this facility in the first place. It's been a growing, maturing type of process for the club too, because we get a lot of our members through having the squash facility. They may never use it, or maybe use it once a year, but it brought them in. Some people just like to go and sit up in the library and read. That's the way they use the club. They may never eat here.

### Patterns of Club Use

Morris: We've tried to compartmentalize who uses the club for what reason. It is one of the reasons I've been working on this survey--to try to get better statistical data on who uses it how.

Jacobson: What have you found so far?

Morris: Again, we haven't released it yet. But I've talked to a lot of people about it, and everybody uses the club differently. There are the groups who like the fourth floor bar. We have a gaming room up there too, where there's a bridge group that meets almost everyday, the domino players, and the like. You usually find those people to be the older members who have a lot more free time than the younger members who have come to eat lunch and go back to work, or play squash and go back to work within an hour, hour and a half, something of that sort. You may have some of the older members who will go and play bridge for two or three hours; they're either retired or have their own firm or however they manage it.

But you find we have quite a few different groups that use the club differently. And there's some people who are really silent members. They never use the club at all. I bet you'd find some people who just sign their bills monthly and haven't been up here in years. That's fine if that's what they want. I think everyone has to join for the reason that they feel comfortable, but at same time find something of value here, I hope.

### Integrating New Members into Club

Jacobson: You've mentioned the fourth floor round table as being a vehicle for getting older members and younger members together. Are there any other ways that the club encourages this mixing? And are there ways in which new members are inculcated in the club's traditions?



Morris: I saw that on your list, and I think the first answer is not well enough. We've spent a lot of time on the House Committee talking about this, saying we lose a lot of members in the first few years, because they have never been brought into feeling comfortable. Some people see this fourth floor round table group as being the old guys keep-away, and they're not that way at all. I think we have tried, and I don't think I am that old yet, and a couple other guys--we try to make this to encourage other people to go. "Come on up. It's a great time."

How we make them understand traditions and bring them into the club has been very poorly done. And I think if anything, it's an error where we'd like to think of other ways to do it. I came up with the idea, the old mentor-mentee type of process, to improve on the previous system where, sure, you have a sponsor, but sponsors traditionally have been very good up to the time the guy signs his first chit. Then they kind of disappear, and may call the guy up on occasion, that sort of thing, but they're not proactive. What I said is, "Look, anybody who serves in this House Committee has basically signed and said that they are interested in actively going forward in doing things for the club." I'll sign on for a mentee for, let's say, a six-month or one-year program, and I'll make sure I call them at least once a month and see that we're doing something together. And it's not our own chits, so there's no economic duress, which I'm especially sensitive to with the younger members feeling that they're getting hooked for a lot of money, or alternatively, getting a free ride too often. That is one way of doing it.

The people on my committee and the Membership Committee would like to have this follow-up in place soon: "I pledge to take a member a year every year for the next couple of years" to basically make them feel more comfortable that there are people here. And in so doing, my idea of saying, "Okay, you're going to meet me Friday for the Round Table," is to get them so that they get involved with that group or with John Lau. The fellow that I just sponsored, I've got John Lau already calling him up for lessons and everything else, so that he will start making it feel like it's his club, and not my club of which he just became a member. We had him for the Friday night dinner dance with his wife, so his wife can see that there are other people there that perhaps she'd like to get to know more also.

We've had a New Members Committee, and they've tried hard to do things to support new members.

##

Morris: All new members are invited to become members of it, but I don't know that it's really articulated well enough to them. In other words, they can be a member, but we should make them automatic members, so that there exists a function going on once a month which they are invited to.

Jacobson: Just to sum up here, what makes this club valuable to you?

Morris: It's a fellowship with other men who have reasonably similar ideas on a wide range of topics where I feel very comfortable but can be mentally challenged as well. It's a segment of my life. I don't know if you want to say it's 5 percent, 2 percent, or whatever it is. I have a very happy family, which is the most important part of my life. I also have a lot of fun in my business career. But the University Club is one segment that makes me enjoy life a little more; it's important.

Jacobson: That's great. Thank you very much.

Morris: Thank you, Lisa.

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Tindall Cashion

The University Club of San Francisco  
One Hundred Years of Tradition and Change

An Interview Conducted by  
Lisa Jacobson  
in 1986



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## TINDALL CASHION

Born in 1914 in Clifton, Arizona, Tindall Cashion graduated from the University of Arizona in 1935 and received an M.B.A. from Northwestern University in 1936. He became a certified public accountant in California in 1937. He moved to San Francisco and joined the University Club in 1953 and served as president in 1965-1966.



BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name Tindall Evans Cashion

Date of birth February 8, 1914 Birthplace Clifton, Arizona

Father's full name Gilbert Lawrence Cashion

Occupation Bookkeeper Birthplace Perryville, Missouri

Mother's full name Margaret Robinson Cashion

Occupation Housewife Birthplace Thormandy, England

Your spouse Valerie Easterbrook Cashion

Your children Michael Evans Cashion

Susan Valerie Cashion

Where did you grow up? Clifton, Arizona

Present community Hillsborough, California

Education B. S. in B. A. , University of Arizona

M. B. A. , Northwestern University

Occupation(s) Certified Public Accountant

Areas of expertise Auditing

Other interests or activities Golf and music

Organizations in which you are active Peninsula Golf & Country Club,

San Mateo, California



Joining the University Club

[Date of Interview: February 10, 1988]##

Jacobson: Can you tell me how you first learned of the University Club?

Cashion: Well, I came up here in 1947 from Los Angeles to go to work in San Francisco. I was interested in joining a club. I looked into several of the city's clubs--the Bohemian Club, which had a long waiting list; the Pacific Union Club, which I didn't think was what I had in mind; the Family Club, which, again, didn't interest me.

I had a friend at the Bank of California that belonged to the University Club. I came up here for lunch a couple of times, and I said I would be interested in joining this club. This is what I had in mind. So, through him, I arranged for a meeting with several people on the Membership Committee and I joined in 1953.

Jacobson: What were you looking for in a club?

Cashion: Well, basically two things. I wanted a place where I could take clients to lunch, where I wouldn't have to argue over the check. I was also interested in having a club that you could use after work, either for social engagements, or just to come up and have a place to relax. And this club was great, because they served lunch and dinner. At that time, they didn't allow women in here for lunch, but they did allow you to bring your wife for dinner. So it got to be a nice situation to be able to come up and have dinner with your wife at night, use the club facilities, plus the fact that you could come up here after work, if you felt like it,

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##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tape see page 276-77.



Cashion: and have a drink or two. At that time, there were always people at the bar, or in the lounge room. It was just a nice sociable experience.

Jacobson: How did you use the club? What kind of activities did you participate in?

Cashion: The first few years I think I used it mostly for lunch. I didn't participate too much in the other activities of the club. Starting in the late 1950s, I got interested in committee work. I guess the first committee I worked on was the House Committee. I was on it for two or three years, and, as a result, met some more people. I just spent more time up here in activities. My wife and I came to a few of the dances. They used to have about two or three dances a year. So one thing led to another.

I was president in 1965, so I must have been on the board in 1963. Anyhow, I served on the House Committee for three or four years in the early 1960s.

#### House Committee

Jacobson: What did the House Committee do?

Cashion: The House Committee is the committee that runs the interior of the club. They're advisors to the manager. They take care of seeing that the furnishings are maintained; they set prices on meals and drinks, of course, with the advice of the manager; they, at that time, worried about the rentals of the room. We didn't have many room rentals then. Those rooms weren't in very good shape. But, I would say, basically, they took care of the interior operation of the club. This was something I was interested in. That was my first committee assignment.

Jacobson: Did the House Committee focus its attention on renovating the bedrooms?

Cashion: Not at the time, because we didn't have the money. It wasn't until the middle 1970s that we finally went out and borrowed about a half of a million dollars to refurbish these rooms. We really brought them up into good shape. Prior to that time, we didn't have the money to do much about it.

Jacobson: How were the rooms used? Were they rented by members on a boarding-type of arrangement?

Cashion: They were available for rent. But, as I say, they were not in good shape. The plumbing was not very good, the beds weren't very good, and the furnishings were old. They were well

Cashion: maintained. We had Chinese housekeepers, just like we have now, so they were clean. There was nothing wrong with that, but they just were not up to Holiday Inn standards, and they certainly weren't up to the standards of the St. Francis, the Mark Hopkins, the Fairmont, or something like that.

Jacobson: Whom were the rooms used by?

Cashion: I would say, primarily, by guests of members. Occasionally, the members would stay here, particularly if they had to stay downtown because they went to a play, they had to work, or something like that. But I would say that the bulk of the rentals were to guests of members, or to members of other clubs. We have reciprocal agreements with twenty or thirty other clubs around the country, and they would use them. But after we did these renovations in the mid-1970s, our room rentals, for several years, were very good.

#### Presidency, 1965-66

Jacobson: You were the president of the club in 1965-66 and vice-president in 1964-65. What needed your attention most during those years?

Cashion: Well, let me think. I think I told you before that there are only two things that I can take much credit for in 1965. One was doing over this garden down here. It was a weed patch. It was terrible. I took one look at it and said we have to do something about it. So, we spent about \$1500 putting in a new chain-linked fence and buying shrubs and plants. The statue of Hermes was in the basement. It wasn't doing any good there, so we got it out. We got a landscape gardener. He put in the shrubs, weeded it, and really fixed it up. That was a basic improvement.

Jacobson: Where is this garden?

Cashion: It's on the other side of Miles Court. Miles Court is this little alley that's in back of the club, between the main club building and the squash courts. The west end of the garden is on Miles Court, and the main part is along California Street.

The second thing was I restored the members' bar. I say "I", the manager and I did, and that was badly in need of repair. The wallpaper was peeling. The bar was rusted out. It was generally in a terrible condition, but none of the members wanted it touched, because it had been there for generations. They thought we would ruin it. But something had to be done. So John Schaeffer and I said, "Let's go." Mostly due to him, we really did it over. We did it over well. We put in a new ceiling. We

Cashion: refurbished the wood. We did over the bar completely. We kept the horseshoe, but we did over the entire interior with stainless steel. We carpeted it, put in a chandelier, and redid the leather upholstery on the chairs. The thing that always pleased me was that all the members said, "You didn't change it a bit." I'll never forget that. "You didn't hurt it a bit. You did all this beautiful work, and it's still the same." I felt very pleased with that, and so did Schaeffer. But that's a lovely little bar. There aren't many places like that in San Francisco. So anyhow, I was very pleased.

I think those are about the two most important things that I can remember doing.

#### Recollections of John Schaeffer and University Club Parties

Jacobson: I'm interested in hearing more about Mr. Schaeffer. Can you tell me about him?

Cashion: Yes. Schaeffer was manager from about the time that I joined, in 1951 or 1952. He might have even come in in the late 1940s. He was manager until 1968 or 1969. I can always remember, because I was in Paris for almost a year, and he left when I was gone. So he must have been manager for roughly twenty years. Great guy--I enjoyed Schaeffer.

Jacobson: It sounds like the two of you worked well together.

Cashion: We did. Lots of the members didn't like Schaeffer. They thought that he was too smart for them, that he was probably getting money under the table from suppliers, etc. They could never quite believe that he was honest. And I don't necessarily say he was honest; I just say he was a very good manager. But Schaeffer was a frustrated contractor, as I told you. He was responsible for building the two wine cellars, which we have downstairs. They're now tearing them out, and doing them over, because they need conference room space. He's also responsible for the Cable Car Room on the second floor and doing over this little Director's Dining Room [on the fourth floor], which is where we met last time. But I thought he was a fine manager for all those years.

He could throw the best party! I tell you, the Christmas parties that we used to have in the 1950s and 1960s were absolutely delightful. They're hard to beat.

Jacobson: What were they like?



Cashion: Well, we took over the whole dining room floor, of course, for the dinner, but we always had the cocktails up here [on the fourth floor]. We'd clear the furniture out of this, and we'd have an hors d'oeuvre table about twelve to fifteen feet long. He always went first cabin. I mean, the price included the works--wine at dinner, the free drinks, outstanding decorations, everything. You'd say "What the heck. This is a gentlemen's club, and we're not going to worry about people signing chits and all that sort of jazz." We probably lost money on them, but the members enjoyed it. That little room at the far end of the dining room, which is right below the dominos room here, was the dance floor. He would use the whole downstairs dining room, except for that corner.

He'd get the damndest dance bands, mostly from San Francisco State [University]. He would hire these non-union musicians. They only had four or five people, but, boy, they could play music! Then he'd always have a couple of strolling violins at dinnertime. You know, he just had a flair. The best way I can describe Schaeffer is Schaeffer had a flair. I really enjoyed him. We had a lot of fun together and did a lot for the club.

Jacobson: What kind of music did the bands play at the Christmas parties?

Cashion: Well, obviously in those days we didn't play Rock n' Roll. We played mostly what the dance bands played in the 1940s and 1950s and 1960s--what I think is danceable music. As I say, they were not loud-playing bands, because that's a small space. So, there was not a lot of brass in them.

I guess I told you this before, but I'll tell you again. The only time that we really had a brass band was when I wanted a Mexican Party. I told Schaeffer, "I want to throw a Mexican Party. Let's have a mariachi." We had a Mexican Party in September. It happened to be one of those warm September evenings, which are rare in San Francisco. We had the cocktails up here. We had the dominos room made up in kind of a cabaret style, with little paper ornaments and small tables and chairs. We had the mariachis there. The club did not have air-conditioning, so we opened all the windows. And I'm telling you, you could hear those mariachis down at the Embarcadero. In all the apartments down California Street, the windows went up. Everybody had their heads out saying, "What the hell's going on?" [laughs] But they played. We had margaritas, the band, and later on we went downstairs for dancing. It's pretty hard to dance to the mariachi, but I sure danced the one-step. But, anyhow, it was a great party!

Club Managers

Jacobson: Sounds like you and Schaeffer put on some great parties. Who were some of the other managers?

Cashion: Patrick Jones came later. We had a guy between Schaeffer and Patrick Jones, and I can't think of his name. He was a Swiss guy and a very competent manager. He was here for a couple or three years. He didn't have much personality, but he was a good kitchen man. I thought he was pretty good, but when they opened a new Vagabond Inn up near Vacaville, he went up there. I think at that time Patrick Jones was the maitre d', so they made Patrick the manager after this other guy left. So, Patrick was the manager until Desmond Elder came. He must have been a manager here for eight or nine years. I didn't really have much to do with Patrick, because I retired in 1973. I had been out of the country for quite a bit from 1968 to 1973, so I don't really what he did, but I liked Patrick Jones. He had a good Irish personality and I'm sure he did a good job for the club. I don't think he was the manager Schaeffer was, but I'm prejudiced. [chuckles]

Desmond Elder is apparently a very good manager from what I hear. I like Desmond. He's a quiet man, but he seems to get the job done all right.

Club Bartenders

Jacobson: What about bartenders: Who were some of the more notable or better ones?

Cashion: Well, I don't know who the best one was. Of the three that I remember, of course, two of them are still here.\* Tom [Tong] is the one that has his picture there in the bar--remember, I showed you--and the two that we still have--I can't remember names, but the one that handles the men's bar at lunch is still here, and the taller Chinaman generally works the dinner bar downstairs. Those are the three bartenders that I remember. Two of them have been around for a long, long time. And Tom was probably here just as long, except I wasn't a member when he started. This little guy here in the members' bar has been here since day one I think. Yes, a long time.

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\*Hey Wong and George Jang, who retired in 1987.





Tindall Cashion, left, dining with fellow club member John Boden and Mrs. Boden at the annual Christmas party.



After-hours Use of the Club

Jacobson: Is the bar used now as much as it was when you were first a member?

Cashion: I think that commuting has taken away a lot of the ambience that we had before. I remember in the 1950s, that you could come up here after work, and the members' bar would be full. We had probably anywhere from fifteen to thirty people up here having cocktails, and having a great old time. And that just doesn't happen today. So I think that, obviously, the biggest change that I see in the club is that it doesn't have the after-hours participation that it used to have. The luncheons, I think, hold up pretty well. In the 1950s, we just had a lot more after-hour participation, particularly from five to seven. That place was busy. I think that goes back, maybe, to just the change in the lifestyle, and the commuting problem that many have. I would guess more of our members live out of town now than they used to. Or else, their wives crack the whip a little more, and they don't get home quite so late as they used to. I sense that's the biggest change that's happened.

Membership Waiting Lists

Jacobson: Could you explain to me something about membership waiting lists: Has the University Club always had one? Is it considered a necessity or a luxury?

Cashion: A waiting list would be great, if you could always have it. If you're talking about the financial aspects, there's nothing nicer than having a waiting list. I was fortunate, because I was president in an era when we did have a waiting list. It really helps to be able to know that you're going to have a full membership, because, obviously, it brings in the revenue. When you have to work to try to get members, I think it takes something away from the attractiveness of the club. Like everything else, people want to join something they can't join. If they can join it, they don't put the same value on it. So I think from that standpoint, it's nice to have a waiting list. I don't know what their situation is now. It certainly solves some of your financial problems when you don't have to worry about getting members in.

At the time that I joined, they did not have a waiting list. I walked around Montgomery Street one morning for about an hour, and I met all the members I had to know in order to get into this

Cashion: club. So whether that still goes on, I doubt it. They have a little stricter procedures now, but in those days, it wasn't quite that difficult.

#### Admission Procedures

Jacobson: What was the admission process?

Cashion: Pretty much the same way they have now. You filled out an application. You had to list the people that you had met. You had to have a sponsor, of course, and I guess, a seconder. Then it was reviewed by the Membership Committee. If you hadn't met people on the Membership Committee, then you had to do that, because they had to know you personally.

They had a custom then. I think they still have it today. The monthly One-and-a-Half parties were an opportunity for people who wanted to bring prospective new members to meet people on the Membership Committee. The Membership Committee generally convened in the library next door. If you wanted to propose somebody, you could bring him in, and have him meet not only the Membership Committee, but whoever your friends were at the bar. You'd tell them that the man wanted to join, and you intended to propose him for membership. I think that worked out to be a very easy way to get the man acquainted, and have them take a look at him. Of course, obviously, the more members you knew in the club, the easier it was for him. But that was the procedure. I'm sure it's pretty much the same today.

#### Impact of Luncheon Clubs on Membership in Private Men's Clubs

Jacobson: I read somewhere in the club's minutes that during the early sixties the Membership Committee was trying to be more aggressive so the club could have a continuous group of people applying for membership.

Cashion: I guess it just goes with supply and demand. I don't know that we were any different then than we are today. Back then there were more people that wanted to belong to a club. I'm trying to think when a couple of these luncheon clubs opened. The World Trade Club opened in the middle or late 1950s. The Bankers' Club opened probably in the middle or late 1960s, when the Bank of America building was built. Of course, those two luncheon clubs took a lot of prospective memberships. People that just wanted to have a place to go to eat lunch joined those clubs, because



Cashion: that's what they were. They were luncheon clubs. They weren't really a full operation. I'm sure that they probably detracted somewhat from prospective memberships of this club.

Of course, today, I don't think people look on clubs as they did twenty years ago. For some reason or other, clubs seem to be something that people avoid. They think they're unclean, or something like that. So, I don't know what the situation is now. But I would say that basically it just depended on the economy, to some extent, obviously. And in those days we didn't have all of the roadblocks you have now, with all of the problems of minority and women memberships, and all that sort of thing. So it was more of a relaxed atmosphere.

Jacobson: So the opening up of all these luncheon clubs then really was a drain on the pool of prospective members for private clubs?

Cashion: I think so. I don't think there's any doubt about it, because primarily they saw one problem as needing a place where you could take somebody, a business associate, to lunch, or dinner, and entertain them. Of course, the Bankers' Club doesn't serve dinner, but the World Trade Club does. They have an active membership at the World Trade Club, and deservedly so, for they do a fine job. Of course, another thing, the economic center of the city went down to the Embarcadero from Montgomery Street. That certainly had a deterring effect on this club, and I'm sure the Family Club, and probably on the Olympic and Bohemian Clubs as well. It's a far hike from the Embarcadero to the Bohemian Club, for example. And it's certainly far enough to come up here if the cable car isn't running.

Jacobson: Are there members who belong to both--a luncheon club as well as a private men's club?

Cashion: Yes. We have members in both. Convenience is one thing. I used to belong to the Commercial Club, which is in the Merchants Exchange Building on the corner of Montgomery and California. And on a rainy day, it's the greatest place in the world to have a quick lunch when you're working on Montgomery Street. That's particularly true of the one in the basement there--the Merchants Exchange Club. That had a much smaller membership than the Commercial Club, but it's, again, primarily a luncheon club.

I had a very close attorney friend that belonged to the Pacific Union Club, but he also belonged to the Merchants Exchange Club. His office was right there on Montgomery and California, and he could duck in there for lunch. He didn't have to come up the hill to the PU Club in order to get something to eat. They filled a need--both of them--a different need, but it depends on what you want.



Jacobson: A private men's club would offer many things that a luncheon club wouldn't be able to, is that not true?

Cashion: I think that's pretty evident. Just by looking at the building you get a much a bigger facility. You get dinners, lounge rooms, and sleeping rooms, if you want to use them for your friends or guests. It's much more of a social atmosphere. Generally, there's something going on here every month of some kind or other. They generally have a domino party, or a boxing night, or a squash tournament, or a lecture, etc. There's just a lot more going on in a club like this. Of course, probably the best example of something that's going on is the Bohemian Club. They have something going on about every week. So it just depends on how actively you want to get involved.

Whereas a luncheon club, from my experience with them, is primarily a place to take somebody to eat lunch, or dinner if they serve dinner. But there's no camaraderie. There's no particular feeling of belonging to a prestigious operation, or anything like that. It's just a place to go where you don't have to argue about who's going to pay the check.

### Entertainment

Jacobson: I believe during your presidency you started having Family Nights. What were they all about?

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Cashion: We were trying to improve our dinner attendance at night, which has always been a problem, not only with us, but with every club or downtown restaurant in the City. We had the One-and-a-Half parties once a month, where we had free martinis for the members. So, I said, "Why don't we have a Family Night once a month, and give everybody two free drinks, and see if that will promote a little business." Well, it did fine for a while. I think we even got a piano player, or some kind of a musical deal to help out. It was fine for a few months. Then the novelty wore off, and we were right back where we started. But what we were trying to do is just to improve the trade in the dining room.

Jacobson: Have wives always been allowed inside the club at dinnertime?

Cashion: Oh, yes. Wives have always been accepted here at night. And, that's really one of the nice things about this club. The other clubs, the Bohemian Club and the PU Club, particularly, do not. I think the Olympic Club does. I'm sure that you can bring your wife to dinner at the Olympic Club at night, but I think the

Cashion: other two do not. This was a plus, as far as I was concerned. You could come up here for dinner at night with your wife, or any other female guest, and have a nice dinner. Before they put all these buildings in front of us, it was really a wonderful view. You could look out over the bay, and see the Bay Bridge, and everything else. But you no longer can.

Jacobson: What about guest speakers for entertainment: Do you remember any who particularly stood out as memorable?

Cashion: That's a hard one for me to answer. I'm trying to think. I remember we had a dinner one night. This goes back a long time, when we had the presidents of the University of California and Stanford here. I can't remember their names now. I think Clark Kerr was president of the University of California at the time. I don't know whether Lyman was president then of Stanford or not, but I know we had a black tie dinner. It was a very nice affair. They came, and they talked. We had a good turnout for it. We've had a couple of ambassadors speak. But I'll be frank; I don't remember any particular one.

#### Club Decor

Jacobson: I wanted to ask you about some of the club's decor. I understand that at one time there were animal heads on the walls.

Cashion: Yes, we had a few: An elk, or a moose, or a deer. I think they were donated by the members. But when they redecorated this thing a few years ago, I guess they decided they were of a different age, so they removed them. That was the end of the animal heads. I think they were given to us by people who either shot them, or inherited them and wanted to get rid of them.

But, incidentally, we do have some lovely paintings. You said you talked to Henry Hardy. Now he can tell you far more about these paintings than anybody else. What I understand from him is that we really have some very fine paintings around here. They're worth quite a bit money. They were given to us. I don't think we ever bought any that I know of--certainly not in my day. They were very well done. You should talk to Henry. He'll know about them.\*

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\*See Hardy interview, pages 14-16, 19-20.

Future of Private Men's Clubs

Jacobson: Private men's clubs have come under some attack lately with the passage of an anti-discrimination ordinance. What do you think is the future of private men's clubs?

Cashion: Your guess is probably as good as mine. Well, I hope they persevere. I think they fulfill a definite need. I certainly enjoyed my association with them, with this one particularly, which is really the basic one that I belong to.

Let me just say that I'm very heartily in favor of men's clubs. I would resent having to take women members, because I think it destroys the atmosphere that we have in this kind of a club. But, again, I don't know what will happen in the future. I'm sure the do-gooders are going to try to make it as difficult as possible to maintain this kind of club. Whether they'll succeed or not, I don't know. I hope not, but it's hard to tell.

I think the men's club creates a very attractive atmosphere for the type of individual that enjoys this kind of environment. It's a shame to have it taken away. That's the way I feel about it. I felt the same way about transcontinental trains, if you want to know the truth. One of the greatest ways to travel in the world was by those old great trains we had, but they're gone. We have nothing like it anymore. It's too bad. That could happen to men's clubs, but I hope not.

Jacobson: What is it about the all-male nature of the club that's so important to you?

Cashion: Oh, the camaraderie, and the ability to swear when you wanted to, and say what you wanted to. How do you explain it? Were you ever a Girl Scout, or a Brownie? Well, then you know. Just put that in the same words for men, and you'll have the same result. That's all I can tell you.

Actually, when I was growing up, I was never a Boy Scout. I was a member of the High Y when I was in high school, and I belonged to a fraternity in college. But, quite frankly, I never had the same feeling out of that as I did belonging to this club. I met far better friends up here than I had ever done when I was growing up. Maybe that's just because you get older, and you appreciate them more. I've made some great friendships in this club, and I still have some of them that haven't passed away. It was just a great experience for me. And I hope it doesn't go away. I don't know what'll happen to us.

Jacobson: How did the members feel about allowing women on the club as guests at lunchtime?



Cashion: I think that passed probably in the middle 1970s, but I didn't object to that. No, I remember going to the Membership Committee when they voted on that. No, that didn't bother me too much. I could understand that more women were coming into the financial community. I could understand that it's pretty hard to exclude them. If you're going to take a bunch of people out to lunch, and one of them happens to be a woman executive, you can't very well say, "Well, let's leave you at home, and we'll go out to the University Club and have lunch." That really didn't bother me.

Now, I suppose, part of that was the fact that we had always been able to have female guests at dinner. So having female guests at lunch didn't bother me, particularly down there. Remember, this floor up here [the fourth floor] was for men only. So at lunchtime, you could always come up and have lunch in the men's bar, and you could use these rooms without any female guests. So that never bothered me particularly. In fact, I thought that was a step in the right direction. It might build a little business. But I oppose women membership.

#### Membership Votes and Assessments

Jacobson: Does the membership ever vote as a group on any particular issues?

Cashion: Well, I think for assessments, they have, yes. When we've had to raise dues, or when we've had assessments to make the improvements, they have to be voted on. That's probably provided for in the by-laws, as I remember correctly. There aren't too many things, really, that take a membership vote. As a matter of fact, the officers aren't even elected by the membership. You probably know that they're elected by the board. The membership elects the board, but the board elects the officers. So the president is not elected by the membership as a whole. He's elected by the members of the board. Maybe that's just as well. Generally, it's the man who is in his last year as a director. So, by that time, they know whether he can do a good job or not.

Jacobson: Have the renovations always been paid for by assessments?

Cashion: I think most of the improvements we made required assessments of some kind or another. There were two big ones recently. The first big one was to do over the sleeping rooms on the first and second floors. We borrowed a lot of money, and then we had to have an assessment in order to provide funds for the repayment. We also had an assessment when we added to the squash courts. But, aside from assessments for increased borrowing, or improvements, I don't know of any other major item that's ever

Cashion: come before the membership for a vote, except for things like letting women in the dining room at lunchtime. Generally, the annual meetings are pretty cut and dry, unless there is something controversial.

Jacobson: What generally happens at these meetings?

Cashion: We have these reports by the various committee chairmen. There is a financial report, and they generally pass out the audited financial statements. Anybody can get up and give comments, such as complaints about the drinks, the service, or the food, or things like that, or the squash court operation. But I think it's more of a meeting for sociability than it is of really getting down to brass tacks, unless you do have a controversial matter.

### Miles Court

Cashion: You know about the history of Miles Court. I told you about that. Well, I want you to talk to Henry Hardy, because he has written a whole history of that, and you definitely have to include that. The story of how we got possession of Miles Court is a classic. I'm not going to bore you with all of it. In fact, I don't know all the details, but you should definitely incorporate that, because that's an interesting story.

We didn't know until the late 1960s that we owned eleven-twelfths of Miles Court. Miles Court, this little alley, has twelve lots on it, six on each side. We own eleven out of the twelve. The little apartment house next door has the twelfth one. But we didn't know that until we ran into this controversy with the Fairmont Hotel in the late 1960s about the air rights over this building, which they tried to buy. We had to investigate just who did have title to Miles Court. That's when we found that we owned eleven-twelfths of it. So, please, talk to Henry. He's written it all up in detail. You've got to put that in. That's a wonderful story.\* We, then, nearly signed away our birth right for 25,000 measly dollars to sell the air rights above this building, which would have been a ghastly mistake. I can't say "ghastly" like Alistair Cooke says "ghastly", but, anyhow, that's the idea. [laughs] So, anyhow, get the story from Henry, because he's got it.

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\*See Hardy interview pages 32-48.



Squash Courts

- Jacobson: Have there been other controversies or points of disagreement in the club?
- Cashion: When you talk about disagreements, I can really only think of one possible disagreement that we've had. That was with the squash courts. Obviously, there are some people who don't think that squash is all that important. So you would sometimes have a conflict between how much money do we spend on those things, particularly when we built the new ones, when only probably twenty-five per cent or less of the members use them. But, on the other hand, it's the only athletic facility we have. They tell me they're the best squash courts on the Pacific Coast. You've got to have something you can be proud of! So that never bothered me. I was always glad to have something that would attract members. I can't think of anything else that ever drove much of a gap in membership, unless women becoming members does. I'm sure that'll be an interesting subject over the coming years. But, outside of that, I can't think of anything.

Value of Club Friendships

- Jacobson: Let me ask you one final question. I think you've probably already answered it in other questions. What makes the club valuable to you?
- Cashion: Well, again, I think two or three things. One is obviously the associations you make--the friends you make. My friendship with Henry Hardy is something I value very much, and it was caused by the club. I have some other friends that I've met up here--Frank King, Fred Johnson, Church Peters, and Doug Fellom. There's three or four of them that I really had a close association with over the years. Some of them, of course, are gone now. Frank Pierce is gone. My old stockbroker, Jack Booth. But, anyhow, that's number one.

Number two is the atmosphere, the congeniality, the parties, and the good times I've had up here. That's another thing that's made it for me. The convenience when my office was right there in that egg crate building you see, the Hartford Building, and before that, right down the street a block. It was important, because I could come up here after work and have a drink or two before I went home. I think that's what you join a club for basically.

Cashion: As I told you before, there's nothing prestigious about joining a club, in my opinion. It might be to a few clubs around the country. I suppose that the people who belong to the Bohemian Club think it's prestigious, and I'm sure it is. But you don't join it for that. You join it just for the fellowship and the friendships, etc., that you're going to make. So that's what I've gotten out of it. I've thoroughly enjoyed it. Really have. If I could use it more, I'd probably still be a member today, but it just isn't practical anymore to do so. So I would recommend it to anybody that wants to have that kind of an experience.

Jacobson: Thank you very much.

Cashion: It's really a great place. I'll never forget it, that's for sure.

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University Club Past Presidents

The University Club of San Francisco:  
One Hundred Years of Tradition and Change

An interview Conducted by  
Lisa Jacobson  
in 1987



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## THEODORE L. ELIOT

Born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1903, Theodore L. Eliot graduated from Harvard University in 1925. He worked in transportation and financial fields until World War II, when he became a captain in the Naval Transportation Service. Moving to California in 1946, he held positions in steamship companies before becoming executive director and president of the San Francisco Art Institute for eleven years. He joined the University Club in 1949 and served as president in 1959-1960.

## CHAUNCEY MCKEEVER

Born in Mexico City in 1907, Chauncey McKeever received an undergraduate degree at Oxford University in 1929 and a J.D. at the University of San Francisco in 1946, pursuing a career in banking and investment management before becoming an attorney. He is a life member of the University Club, having joined in 1936 and serving as president three terms, in 1951-1952 and from 1962 to 1964.

## CHARLES EDWARD NOBLE

Born in Boston in 1930, Charles Edward Noble was awarded a B.A. by Harvard College in 1952 and an M.B.A. by Harvard Business School in 1954. Undertaking a career as investment counsel in San Francisco in 1958, he joined the University Club that year as a third-generation member, and became president in 1960-1961.

## CHURCHILL C. PETERS

Born in 1898 in Seattle, Churchill C. Peters holds the longest continuous membership in the University Club. He joined in 1923, after he had graduated from Yale University in 1919 and become a financial planner. He was president for two terms, from 1940 to 1942, and led the movement to allow women guests into the club while accompanied by members.

## MURRAY SMITH

Born in Aurora, Illinois in 1932, Murray Smith received his B.A. from Princeton in 1954 and a J.D. from Harvard in 1959. That same year he moved to San Francisco, where he now works as a business executive. He joined the University Club in 1968 and served as president in 1983-1984.

## WILLIAM O. SUMNER

Born in 1932 in New York City, William O. Sumner received a B.A. from Harvard College in 1954 and a J.D. from Harvard Law School in 1959. He became an investment manager in San Francisco in 1968. He joined the University Club in 1961 and served as president in 1984-1985.



BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name CHARLES EDWARD NOBLE

Date of birth 9/18/30 Birthplace BOSTON

Father's full name CHARLES ALBERT NOBLE, JR

Occupation PHYSICIAN, RETIRED Birthplace BERKELEY CA

Mother's full name AGNES DON ADELUNG

Occupation HOUSEWIFE (DECEASED) Birthplace OAKLAND CA

Your spouse —

Your children —

Where did you grow up? San Francisco

Present community " "

Education Hawaii College AB '56 + Hawaii Business School MBA '53

Occupation(s) Investment Counsel

Areas of expertise Investments, Wine

Other interests or activities —

Organizations in which you are active —





BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name MURRAY SMITH

Date of birth FEB. 9, 1932 Birthplace AURORA, ILLINOIS

Father's full name MURRAY DABNEY SMITH

Occupation BUSINESS EXEC. Birthplace WINTERSET, IOWA

Mother's full name MARY HELEN PEASE SMITH

Occupation — Birthplace MADISON, N.C.

Your spouse JEAN PORTER SMITH (DIVORCED)

Your children HELEN PORTER SMITH  
SAMUEL CRAIG SMITH

Where did you grow up? AURORA, ILLINOIS

Present community SAN FRANCISCO

Education PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, A.B. 1954  
HARVARD LAW SCHOOL, J.D. 1959

Occupation(s) ATTORNEY, INVESTMENT BANKER, BUSINESS EXEC.,  
MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

Areas of expertise FINANCE, VENTURE CAPITAL,  
SMALL CO. MANAGEMENT, BUSINESS VALUATION

Other interests or activities SQUASH, GOLF, MUSIC, TRAVEL

Organizations in which you are active UNIVERSITY CLUB, OLYMPIC  
CLUB, VALUATION ROUNDTABLE OF S.F.



BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name William O. Sumner

Date of birth 3/15/32 Birthplace NYC, NY

Father's full name Robert Emlen Sumner

Occupation Deceased Birthplace Boston, MA.

Mother's full name Mary Barnett Fitzgerald Sumner

Occupation Retired Birthplace Boston, MA

Your spouse Nancy Dry Sumner

Your children Robert, Allison, Stephen

Where did you grow up? New Canaan, CT

Present community San Mateo, CA.

Education Harvard AB '54, Harvard Law School JD '57

Occupation(s) Investment Manager

Areas of expertise Stocks, Bonds

Other interests or activities

Organizations in which you are active



## I THE UNIVERSITY CLUB

[Date of Interview: January 22, 1988]##

Introductions

- Jacobson: Why don't we go around the room. Introduce yourself and say how long you have been with the club, just for the purpose of testing out how the machine is picking up the voices.
- Sumner: I'm Bill Sumner, I joined the club in 1961.
- Noble: I'm Charlie Noble, I joined the club in 1958.
- Smith: I'm Murray Smith, I joined the club in 1968.
- McKeever: I'm Chauncey McKeever, I joined the club in 1936.
- Eliot: I'm Ted Eliot, I joined the club in 1949.
- Peters: I'm Church Peters, I joined in July 1923.
- Noble: Are you our senior member?
- Peters: I think so. There's a fellow in Chicago that we keep hearing about. I believe he is a regular member, but I cannot find anyone who has ever seen him. Must be a phantom member, and we do appreciate his dues, if he pays them.
- Noble: So you are our senior local member?
- Peters: I am certainly the senior local member and probably the oldest local member.

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##This symbol indicates that a tape or segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes, see pages 276-77.



- Sumner: No, Barreda Sherman is, isn't he?
- Peters: Yes, Barreda is older than I by several years and probably joined before I did but for some reason resigned for a few years and then rejoined after I had become a member.
- Noble: Remember that wonderful dinner when we had Barreda and Leon de Fremery? That was a memorable occasion. As I recall--and gentlemen please add to this because I am sure that I have a very sketchy memory--we had a dinner about five years ago honoring our two eldest members at the time who talked about the club and also their earlier days in San Francisco.\* I remember specifically our friend from Mill Valley [F. Barreda Sherman] talking about his father taking him to a restaurant in downtown San Francisco in 1896 or 1897. Barreda was a young boy, and I've forgotten the restaurant, but it was just memorable that anyone could recall having been taken to lunch in downtown San Francisco before the turn of the century. But I do recall him saying he went to the old University Club, also, I believe, before this building was built. I think it was down on Bush Street. This building was built in 1909.

#### The Last Minstrel Show

- Jacobson: Looking back over the years that you have been a member of the club, I want you to think back to what would be the period of the club's greatest glory.
- Noble: When I was young.
- Peters: I would say it was probably during the twenties when Loyall McLaren, Ken Monteagle, the Paramore brothers, Ted and Jim, were here. I don't want to leave anyone else out, but there were a number of people of that age who were very talented and very active. George Montgomery was another. I think that was the time we had our last real minstrel show. In those years, the club gave a minstrel show every year, and we all blacked up (this was surely 1928). It was so popular that they couldn't both have the dinner here on the dining room floor and have the show, so we hired a theatre over at the Fairmont Hotel.

We had a lovely dinner. It was very formal. I don't think it was "black tie." In fact, I'm sure it wasn't a black tie, but it had a certain dignity to it. I remember one of our most revered members brought a guest from somewhere upon foreign

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\*See appendix, pp. 286-300, for full text of talk, delivered May 8, 198

Peters: shores, and we wanted to impress him. He was a rather distinguished gentleman and he had a long cigarette holder which was probably about twelve inches long. He had a cigarette in the outer end, and the other end he held in his mouth.

We had a man named George McNear, who was known for emotional and erratic performances from time to time. We were all sitting down in the dining room, and it was a very, very dignified and promising dinner. This guest lit up his cigarette at the end of this holder, and McNear didn't seem to like it. He got up, went over and grabbed it out of this man's mouth, and said, "We don't like that kind of a thing here," and he broke the fancy holder. That was the start of the dinner, and it sort of went from there to get a little bit ribald.

At that time, I was not in the chorus because I had been away during the rehearsals. I was a policeman, and so was Covington Janin, who was a very husky friend of all of ours. He played on the Harvard football and baseball team, hit a home run against Yale, was a great hero.

Eliot: Good for him!

Peters: We were still friends anyway. [laughter] So we went across to the Fairmont and got everybody organized in there. They had a nice theatre room. We had the stage at one end with a curtain suspended on a rather heavy rod.

Loyall McLaren, of course, was the interlocutor, and he was very good at it. We were trying to get the audience quiet; there was a good deal of talking and joking and laughing. One person was a little bit extreme, and Janin and I thought that he really should be ejected, so to speak. We were in police uniforms. We were good friends and ex-athletic phenomena. We got together, and we grabbed this fellow--probably was McNear--and took him out and ejected him, which we had intended to do. Just about that time, they had started to raise the curtain, and the damn hinges on which the rod was hung collapsed, and the curtain fell down and the rod hit Dick McLaren, Loyall's brother, on the head and the curtain enveloped the others. I think they called the show off. [laughter] So I think we can say, as far as my memory goes, that was the last minstrel show of the club. Some shows came later, but they were not real old-fashioned minstrels.

There were some little repercussions after that, of course. We had some of the older members of the club who were not quite as obstreperous as some of the younger members. I remember Mr. Baldwin, who was a marvelous person. He was an attorney, and he and his son have always been members. He was on the board of directors. Within a few days, I was requested to appear at Mr. Baldwin's office and explain my conduct at the dinner. I went,

Peters: and I will say I had a very, very personal conversation with Mr. Baldwin. He was very reasonable and allowed as how we had some reputation to live up to, maybe we should have done it in a little different way. [laughter]

He said, "Well, the board was considering restricting your membership for some period, but I think that under the circumstances, we will forego any further reprimands on this matter."

Well, that was the last minstrel show, and I think that was the heyday. Then came 1929 and came the crash, and that changed things a good deal, just like maybe this last crash [October 19, 1987] we've had is going to change some habits of clubs and entertainment and things. I had prearranged to leave San Francisco on business. I went to New York, and I didn't return here for some time. I kept my membership, but I didn't return here until the summer of 1932. By that time, the whole economy had flattened out, and there wasn't the spirit of jubilation and freedom that we had during 1928-29.

Noble: If you came in June of 1932, you got here just at the low of the market.

Peters: I did; it was actually the low, and I was working for a firm called Strassberger and Co. They were one of the fine old firms of San Francisco, but you've probably never heard of them.

Noble: Oh yes, I have.

Peters: Finally, I decided that I wasn't contributing as much as they were contributing to me, and I left Strassberger and started a firm of my own. I just attended our last annual meeting, and it was pretty dull, but I said, "I think if you don't mind, I'd like to say a word." So I said, "This is the fifty-fourth annual meeting of Protected Investors of America that I have attended, and I think we're better off now than we were fifty-four years ago, and I hope you won't go get too damn discouraged and will just keep going." [laughter]

Sumner: Now they stopped the minstrel show, but didn't the Shambles come in?

Peters: Well, then they did. After the shock of the collapse of the market, the Shambles came in, in the thirties.

Sumner: Can somebody explain to me what the Shambles were? All I know is that Frank Adams gave me a little book, which I still have, called Songs of the University Club. They were a bunch of songs that were sung at the Shambles. I guess up until World War II, it was an annual show. That's all I know about it. Tell us.

Peters: It was a good vaudeville-type show with lots of music.



World War II Era

Jacobson: Was anyone here during World War II to witness the Shambles?

Peters: Yes, I was here at World War II to witness a lot of things more serious things than the Shambles, which were good and cheery shows.

Noble: But the club was open during World War II?

Peters: I'll say it was open! We had to have somebody down at the door to pay the suppliers in cash because our credit had worn out. We ran the club by having members who were managers. They served as a manager in lieu of paying a monthly fee. There was one very nice young fellow named Mark Thomas. He was studying hotel management in his college course. So he volunteered to be the manager of the club and put a little more order into it. And he did a fine job. Then he left and went down to establish a hotel in Monterey, right across the street from the Naval station there which used to be the Del Monte Hotel.

Sumner: This was the Mark Thomas Inn then?

Peters: Yes, Mark Thomas was a very nice, very able fellow. He did a fine job here. When Mark left, Lloyd Means was the manager for a little while.

Noble: Another Harvard man?

Peters: Yes. I think you'd better forget that. [laughter] Harvard was not noted for instruction in hotel management, but Lloyd helped a great deal as a "pinch hitter." I was president, as a matter of fact, because I was just a little too old to be in active service but not quite old enough to lose my interest in what was going on. During World War I, I had been commissioned on the field of battle as a second lieutenant in the Tank Corps under Patton. He was a colonel then. This was the original Tank Corps. So when World War II was approaching, General Patton, who had then come into considerable fame, asked four or five of us who had been commissioned at the same time to join him in forming a tank corps for World War II.

But the army said we were too old, and they offered us some officers jobs at the desk, and that didn't appeal to me. I decided to stay in San Francisco and go into manufacturing a special kind of powder for the Army and Navy. In the meantime, a lot of other people my age, and many younger members joined the armed services.

## Financial Difficulties

Peters: I was elected president in 1940. That was when the financial difficulties began, as club rules provided that members joining the military service would be free of any dues. The club wanted to have them come and use the club, but most were assigned to other areas. So the use of the club diminished, and the dues disappeared, and so our cash position was what you might call very negative.

It was also a little bit more negative because we found out that part of the club's cash flow was going into the manager's pocket. I had induced Frank Adams to come into the administration as vice president then, which was a very good idea. When we confronted the manager, he admitted that he had been somewhat limited in cash flow from other sources, and I didn't blame him because we were paying him hardly anything. But we arranged that if he would leave the club and pay us back over a five-year period, we wouldn't report him to the insurance company. I have all this in my files here.

So then we got a man named Maddock, and Maddock was a tall, gaunt sort of a character who had been managing various small institutions. He straightened things out quite a little bit, and under him, we began to show a slight profit. In the meantime, I will say that we were having serious negotiations with Stanford University because our mortgage was overdue for four or five years.

Frank Adams was excellent in negotiations with Stanford. At that time, Stanford had a very fine fellow, Frank Walker, in charge of their finances. He had come over there from one of the large investment banking houses in the East. He treated the club very, very well, and they deferred the interest payments. They never forgave the amounts due, but they deferred payments for an indefinite period.

We also had a member named James K. Moffitt, who was a very, very revered citizen of San Francisco. He was a power in the Crocker Bank, which held a moderate-sized note from the University Club.\*

Noble: He was the president, wasn't he?

Peters: I'm not sure.

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\*Moffitt was Crocker Bank's Chairman of the Board from 1937-50, and Chairman of the Executive Committee from 1950-52.



Noble: The Moffitts owned the First National Bank of San Francisco and merged it into the Crocker, and J. K., who was an old family friend, became the head. I know that J. K. was very favorably known here for a number of reasons. Also, there was a table at which he and his friends sat at lunchtime.

Peters: Yes, in the corner. Well, he was in love with the University Club, and he thought it was just a great place, and he and a good many of his friends were very cooperative. He offered to loan us money personally and to see that the Crocker Bank deferred interest on the debt to them and all kinds of things to help, none of which we accepted, because we were very proud and decided to try and sneak along on our own resources.

#### Opening the Club to Women

Peters: About this time I decided something had to be done because we didn't expect the members back from the war for a couple of years, and we knew we weren't going to get very many new dues-paying members because most of the people of club age were in the service. So we felt we had to do something to stimulate interest in the club.

I was familiar at that time with the University Club in Seattle. My father was the first president of it many years ago, and I had been a member all during the Depression when I lived up there in the brokerage business. They had a ladies' annex, and it was a very successful thing for the use of the wives of members. Then I began to look into the custom further, and I found that the Portland University Club had the same privilege, that they could invite ladies to the club. Then I found that some clubs in New York were doing the same thing. It was all working to their advantage, so I had a club luncheon. I can remember it now. I said, "We have some very important things to discuss. Please everybody come." Nearly everybody came. We had a large audience.

I said, "We are faced with a problem, and change may be in order, and one thing that we may do to increase the use of the club would be to permit members to bring their lady friends for cocktails." At first there was great opposition from many people as the idea was so new. I exchanged some letters with Mr. Moffitt and several of the other members about it. Eventually they all agreed that it was a good idea. That's how we began to permit ladies to come into the club when accompanied by a member.

Noble: Did the ladies only come for cocktails at that point and you had to go out for dinner, or did it include dinner?

Peters: I think it soon included dinner, but it started with cocktails. That's the way things go, you know.

But we wanted to go much further than that. The Ladies Annex of the University Club in Seattle was very delightful, so we were going to build a fifth story for a ladies annex, with an entrance on California Street. We had engineering firms come to see whether the structure of the building would support a fifth story. Believe it or not, they replied in the affirmative.

Noble: That's amazing to me because I can recall at one point when I was involved on the board that we had to take the statue off this floor or the floor below and put it down there in the garden because the engineers told us at that time that the statue was so heavy that it was dangerous to the integrity of the building.

Jacobson: This was the statue of Hermes?

Noble: Yes, indeed.

Peters: I could well believe that. However, we proceeded with our plans, and in investigating the roof and going up to look at the surface, the engineers found a great many empty bottles of bourbon. One of our members, Leon Walker, lived next door, and his bedroom window opened up towards the roof. Those were his bottles. We were going further ahead on that idea seriously, and suddenly the government came along with a war-time rule against using steel for anything as frivolous as a club. So we gave up that idea.

This was a severe blow to the general idea, but we persisted. We got together with our wives, and we decided, "Well, we'll have to let them come in through the main entrance." [laughter] Then we had to do some decorating. My wife, Mrs. Means, and several others were very good at decorating, and I think that they were the ones who removed the animal heads. A move which I think met with the approval of all except those members who had shot the beasts in the first place.

Noble: I thought one of the reasons that the animal heads were removed was that one of the animal heads fell down and hit the members' table. Luckily it wasn't during a time that the members were sitting there, but it nicked the edge of the table, and that was the end of the animals.

McKeever: They were collectively referred to as the ex-presidents. [laughter]

Jacobson: Where were the animal heads kept?

Noble: They were gifts from I don't know how many members, but they hung in the dining room.

- Eliot: They were African animals, most of them.
- Noble: They were great big heads. These weren't just little deer or rabbits. They were moose and elk. A lot of African stuff. They were very handsome.
- Peters: I have a letter here from Mr. Moffitt. He says, "Your plan seems to be working very, very well. Everybody is very happy with it." I think that being able to bring in females for dinner and cocktails did create enough interest in membership to keep the club solvent. In the meantime, Frank Adams was working on the loan with Stanford, and Mr. Moffitt was contributing his interest to keep the Crocker Bank off our neck. So we shelved the reconstructive financing. That was about it, and I have those letters.
- Jacobson: Yes, thank you. I'd like to have a look at them.

### Liquor Lockers

- Noble: Before I forget, may I ask you a question, Church? Maybe you can answer, maybe somebody else can. When I was a young member of this club, which was obviously many years ago, there was a story about a secret door between the library here and the building next door. Can you tell me anything about that?
- Peters: I thinks it's a rumor only.
- Noble: I thought it was too, but if anybody knew, you probably would.
- McKeever: It had lockers all around with keys in them. Members would put their bottles in there, take the bottles across the bar and have the bartender serve the drinks and bring the bottles back.
- Noble: The way they do it in The French Club.

##

- Peters: This room was the bar. It was very attractive, and the bar came out about to here. You had lockers at that end and lockers outside where the elevator entrance is, as I recall it. When I was first a member, that was where you kept your liquor.
- Eliot: Like The French Club, you had your liquor in your locker.
- Peters: And this was in Prohibition. I think you had to do that.



Noble: But Murray points out that the way trends are going, it may well be that clubs that "discriminate" are going to lose their liquor licenses. We will have to revert to the bottle operation if we can get away with it. Somebody told me that that's illegal, but they don't bother The French Club because they have so few members.

Smith: I doubt that that's illegal. I'm not sure. I'm sort of looking into it at the moment. They are definitely harassing us.

Peters: Would that solve our problem, to bring our own liquor?

Smith: It wouldn't solve the problem because it would change the nature of the club. Granted that you went through a period when it was like that, but I think today it would change the nature of the club a lot. It would be too bad if we had to do that.

### Halcyon Days

Eliot: Lisa, I think your original question was when were the halcyon days of the club. My guess is that it was, and I'll back you up Church, the period you spoke of when they had the minstrels and the theater and the plays and all that kind of stuff. I base that on a number of conversations with Berrien Anderson. I can't remember the others. Was Norman Livermore a member of this club?

Sumner: I see his name is in that book.

Eliot: I probably heard from him, too. They really had a glorious time in this club. I base my confirmation of what you said on a conversation I had with those gentlemen.

Peters: They did. It was more of a genial get-together, parking was easier, and I think at that time, it was the custom for the gentlemen to stop off on the way home.

Noble: San Francisco was so much smaller, and I suppose it was probably much more social and less business oriented, as most clubs were.

Eliot: All of us at this table, Charles, can remember--I'm sure every one of us--that even since that period, lots of people came up here for cocktails after work. The bar would be crowded. There would be domino games here, at the Pacific Union Club and all of the other clubs.

Noble: I played dominoes here on my way home from work from 1958.

- Eliot: All that changed, and I guess it changed because so many members moved out of the city.
- Sumner: I also think there were different attitudes on the part of wives and sweethearts; they wouldn't stand for the guy coming home half roasted.
- McKeever: I have a photograph of a silver bowl and a bottle of 1870 brandy. We used that to set the club mortgage on fire. I showed that to somebody a month or two later, and he said, "Well, that's all very well, but that mortgage is 3 - 1/2 percent." Next day, we had to go to the bank and borrow at 6 percent.
- Noble: I recall. I attended the mortgage burning, and I remember they had the vice-president of finance from Stanford University, which held the mortgage, come up to celebrate the payment of the mortgage. I recall precisely as you did that it wasn't long before we were back into the banks at a much higher rate of interest.
- Jacobson: How about anybody else? Any other periods of great glory for the club?
- Noble: It's hard to beat that story. I think he was telling the truth; I don't think any of us can beat it.
- Sumner: I don't think clubdom, in that sense, survived the Depression. Certainly World War II was another major blow. Then the enormous changes in this country in the sixties was another, because when I joined the club in 1961, you would always find half a dozen to a dozen pleasant people having a drink in the bar at night. Ten years later, you could toss a hand grenade in the bar, and if Tom the bartender ducked, you wouldn't hurt anybody.
- Noble: It became more and more of a luncheon club as time went on.
- Sumner: More and more people joined it for business reasons. I have a theory, which is that a board of directors is faced with an economic problem: balancing the budget. They see that their membership is three hundred members, and if they took in another twenty-five, they would run the membership initiation fees through the income account and balance the budget. A fellow on the board could get off the board, without having to raise dues. So we kept increasing the number. And this along with people moving to the suburbs, and the increasing number of members undercut the cohesiveness. Somewhere in there we passed a magic line between the admitting socially desirable, and we began to admit the socially acceptable. The whole thing mounted up. I think that's a major problem of all clubs, not just ours.



Admissions Policies

- Peters: Now how do you define the socially desirable and the socially acceptable?
- Sumner: I can define that pretty clearly on an individual basis within five minutes. My motto in life is: "Often in error, never in doubt."
- Jacobson: Chauncey McKeever, how would you define that difference?
- McKeever: Good looks, ten minutes of conversation. I'm a snob.
- Peters: Maybe you could say that the socially desirable would be those you would like to invite to your own house, and the others you would like to see somebody else take them to their house.
- Noble: That is the most positive way. Another way to look at it would be the people you encourage to come because you really enjoy having them in your group, and the others would be people you couldn't see any good reason for not having here. You really didn't want to have them in your group.
- Jacobson: This brings to mind a question I had, which is how have admissions policies changed over the years.
- Noble: Let me speak to that briefly. This relates here as well as to others clubs' admissions committees that I have been on. I always harken back to the comment that Chauncey gave me years ago that I have never forgotten, which was, "In England, clubs were organized to keep people out." I think in the old days, in this country as well, if a member strongly objected to the admission of a prospective candidate, the committee, generally speaking, accepted his word and did not allow that person in.

As time came along—and I haven't been on the Admissions Committee in this club for twenty-five years, probably, but I have been on others—I think that the trend has been toward not just soliciting the views of members because we should have them, but evaluating the reason that a particular member might not want somebody in. Did they fight over a woman? Was there a business deal between the two of them that went awry, and so forth and so on. So I think as times go along, committees have generally come to the point of wanting to evaluate the criticism. They want to know why. I think also more weight has been put on the groups that are supporting the membership of the applicant as against those who were behind keeping somebody out—in other words, extending this evaluation to another level.

So it has definitely changed, although as far as I know, the blackball system is still operating at this time.

Smith: I have an interesting aside to that. When I was on the Admissions Committee, we had a situation where a guy was put up for membership, and he went to the cocktail party and so on and so forth. His name came up, and one of the members of the Admissions Committee said, "I vote against him." The chairman of the Admissions Committee said, "Are you exercising your right to blackball this guy?" He said, "Yes, I am." The other members of the committee said, "Well, gee, you really can't do that. What are your reasons?" He said, "No, I'm exercising my right." We had a bit of a discussion which went on for ten or fifteen minutes, and everybody was trying to not allow him to do that.

McKeever: To take away his blackball.

Smith: That's right: to take away his blackball. We didn't say you can't do that. We just said, "Gee, wouldn't you rather do it another way?" He said, "No, no." Finally after ten or fifteen minutes, or some period of time, he said, "All right, I'll tell you." Then he went on for about ten or fifteen minutes with reasons why he thought this guy should not go in the club. Everybody was sitting back with their eyes open and saying, "Holy moley." Of course, he had really good reasons; there wasn't a single vote in his favor on the Admissions Committee, and he has not been repropose, and given what this guy said, he shouldn't have belonged to the club. He chose to try to do it the other way. It was kind of interesting.

Sumner: I was at that event, too, Murray, and I got the impression that the rejection was specifically because a member of the Admissions Committee exercised a blackball. I suspect that if another member had come in off the street and said, "I object," that may not have carried any weight unless the grounds were stated. You're right; he had to state his reasons, even though he might have prevailed if he'd stuck to his blackball and refused to state his reasons.

Smith: Well, he didn't have to.

Noble: It's always amusing in one sense and frustrating in another sense that over the years people who come from afar and haven't grown up in San Francisco can slide into many clubs. I am not talking about the University Club; I'm talking about clubs in general. Whereas people who have grown up here, because of the greater frequency of interchange between members of the same organizations, may have developed an enemy. Often the people who develop the enemy are much more interesting than some of the bland people who come from elsewhere and just slide in.

Sumner: I guess the bottom line is: I think there has been a substantial change in the character of the people taken into the club as the membership list has expanded. I think when I joined there were 350 members maximum, and now we can let in 500, and there are 470.

Smith: Let me give you a modern footnote on this; I'm not sure this is history. There is a guy now who is playing squash down here, and he is in his early sixties. He has moved here from Los Angeles. He's the new redevelopment director of San Francisco, so he's a prominent guy, and he's a fine guy. He belongs to the University Club of Los Angeles where he had a similar position. He is a great find for San Francisco; he's just a terrific professional in one's mind.

McKeever: Squash player?

Smith: No, as a redevelopment director. He is forbidden by current San Francisco law from belonging to this club. Current San Francisco law as enacted by our terrific Board of Supervisors forbids any San Francisco employee, which he is, from belonging to any club which discriminates on the basis of race, religion, sexual preference, whether you have AIDS or ARC. This gentlemen cannot belong to our club. I would propose him in a moment, and everyone of you would agree that he is a fine guy and should belong. He would like to belong; he's prohibited by San Francisco law from belonging.

Peters: Can he be a Mason, or a Rotarian or a Kiwanian?

Smith: I don't know that. I don't think so. Well, let's see, Rotarians, now, cannot by law discriminate. They don't discriminate anymore. So I guess he could belong to the Rotary. Any club which discriminates in any of those ways, an employee of the city or county cannot by law belong to. As a lawyer, I believe that law is unconstitutional.

Noble: The New York City law was the first of these. The Supreme Court will decide on the constitutionality or lack thereof during the current session.

Smith: Everybody is sort of waiting for that.

Noble: But I was interested because I was talking on that subject to somebody involved in City Hall, and they received more letters from ladies in the ladies' clubs in San Francisco opposing the then-proposed city ordinance than letters from members of men's clubs.

McKeever: I'm sorry, I don't understand.



Jacobson: In other words, the ladies' clubs did not want to be in a position to be forced to accept men into their clubs. And they were the ones who were writing letters protesting. Apparently, there are more women's clubs which stand to "lose" by the ordinance than men's clubs.

Your discussion of the changes in the admissions policies brings up a question for me which is: Are there any sort of universal reasons for blackballing a potential member?

Noble: If you were a member of a club, you would like to feel that if you wander into the bar by yourself, that any member who might come and stand next to you would be somebody you would enjoy conversing with and having lunch with and having dinner. What he does for a living doesn't matter as long as he is ethically and morally sound, the normal standards. But conviviality and acceptability on a social basis are the primary objectives.

Peters: Well, Charlie, I think I'd go one step further and say he doesn't have to enjoy it, but he wouldn't object to the guy.

Noble: Well, that's one step further. I'm a member of the Bohemian Club, which is a much larger organization than this one. Everybody in this room has undoubtedly been to the bar at the Bohemian Club, and it's a long bar there. Therefore, if there is somebody in the room whom you'd prefer not to engage in conversation, you can slide down the bar. We have an intimate bar here, and it's a little different.

#### Times of Challenge and Crisis

Jacobson: I have asked you about the period of the club's greatest glory, and now I want to ask you about the period of the greatest challenge to the club.

Noble: I think during war.

McKeever: This club waived all dues for any member who was in the service. I remember I was at sea in the North Atlantic when the mail screwed up. We didn't get any mail for three months. That's pretty tough on a ship with two thousand people on board. I think we got stationed on the northern coast of Iceland, and we were told there was a freighter with our mail that had been tagging around for three or four months looking for us. We moved around. When the first mail call came, they sent six boats to get mail to every task force with a flagship. (There were two cruisers and a battle ship, and eight destroyers.)

McKeever: That night, it was a very quiet night. Most people had numbered their letters so that their spouses would not read them in the wrong order. All the mail I got was from the Burlingame Club saying dues were not paid.

Eliot: What was the question? The period of the greatest challenge to the club?

Jacobson: The period of the greatest challenge to the club. We have heard about the period in World War II. Were there other periods that were difficult for the club?

Eliot: Somebody said it had been the club's poverty during World War II.

Noble: That was probably the worst, but we've had periods since the war when the costs of operation and the size of the membership and the income and outgo problems have been difficult.

#### Question of Admitting Women and Minority Members

Eliot: I think we are sitting right on the threshold of another great happening, and that is the admission or non-admission of women and minorities.

McKeever: Do you think that will have any positive effect on the income of the club?

Eliot: Of course it will, but I'm not thinking of that. I'm thinking of the tremendous change if we let women in here and a lot of minorities. It's a huge change; it will be a great challenge for the club.

Noble: The concept of clubs existing per se--clubs are basically organized on the basis that people are allowed in who are acceptable to the members. The challenge is: Will society allow organizations to choose people on a personal basis of whether they are acceptable or not, without regard to having a certain number of people who come from a certain background?

Sumner: I agree; I have had that conversation with two of our members who feel very strongly that the police power of the state should be used to impose membership requirements on all clubs, including this one. I said, "You remind me of the Baptist preachers who were so strongly against Demon Rum that they pushed through Prohibition." They were using the police power of the state to enforce their particular moral precepts. In both cases, they said that the Baptist preachers were wrong, but this is a moral



Sumner: issue and damn it, we have not just a right but an obligation to enforce the admission of women in clubs like this and the admission of men in women's clubs.

So all I can say is Big Brother lives because the Baptist preacher who brought us Prohibition is still alive and well.

Peters: I won't take up your time, but I have some very interesting letters written by our eminent member Frank Adams on the subject. One letter in here is the best I have heard of a succinct defense of the club as it is now. I didn't know we were going to get into that big question of should we allow women; I thought this was the past history. I don't think you want to put that in.

Jacobson: I am interested in it in terms of getting a sense of what your view is about the greatest challenge facing the club.

#### Push for Affirmative Action from Within

Smith: Let me respond a little bit to the question about challenges. Bill might have some things to add to what I'm going to say. I think he and I feel pretty similar about it, and it does concern this issue of membership. The club has not really discriminated against anybody on the basis of anything except gender for quite a while. We don't have any black members, but I'm sure we would. To my knowledge, nobody has been proposed, and that's a problem.

Sumner: I tried to recruit two different guys, both of whom are good gentlemen who are black, but neither one was interested.

Smith: And I would if I knew any because I think it would be good for the club. That's kind of beside the point. I do believe that there was a period in the seventies when the club had what we saw as a challenge. And that was that there was a definite minority in the club who had not belonged to the club very long; they were essentially new members who were able, through this means and that, to achieve pretty good working control of the club--the board of directors and the presidency and so on. This went on for a while in the mid-seventies.

Their clear objective, among others, was to admit women members. You can be on either side of that, but we obviously are pretty much on the same side of it. My point is that that is rather irrelevant. I think Bill and I and some other people got quite upset and fed up with this achieving of control by a group of relatively new members who didn't particularly represent the membership as a whole. They were doing what they wanted to do and were perpetuating themselves all of a sudden, and through a

Smith: process which I don't really like to get involved in, which is politics, we stopped that. I became president, and Bill became president behind me. That situation really has changed. I believe the club now is pretty much run on a representative basis.

#### Membership Participation in Resolving Club Controversies

Smith: Now we are going through a process of deciding whether the membership wants to change the bylaws and admit women members, but, in my opinion, this time around, it has been done very nicely. A committee was appointed which had equal representation. The membership has been informed; there were meetings. There was material mailed out to the members, and a vote has been taken which hasn't been tallied yet.\* As far as I'm concerned, whatever comes out is okay by me. It might be against the way I prefer or the way I voted and favor, but however it happens, I think it will be representative, whereas ten years ago, that wasn't what was happening at all.

Things were being supposedly rammed down our throats as it were. Three hundred eighty-five, or something like that, out of 475 is pretty high.

Jacobson: I'm curious how members who have not been with the club for a long time were able to move their way up into positions as officers.

Smith: You express an interest and say I'd like to serve on a committee and get on a committee. Then if you do things and you do serve, you spend time, and you do things for other people, then you maybe become the chairman of a committee. You get on a House Committee. There is a ladder, and it is based on doing things for the rest of the members. It is pretty straightforward. It is now and used to be. There was a time when it wasn't exactly that way.

Eliot: I don't know about Chauncey, and I don't know about you, Church, and I pick you two and myself as the three oldest. I have fought against letting women come in here, and I think I voted three times against it. My philosophy is changing to the extent we are getting very few in number at our age, and the club is really for those who are much younger--maybe between thirty-five and fifty.

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\*A plurality of members voted 207 to 149 to uphold the bylaws barring women from membership.

- Peters: I wouldn't resign, I would still vote, but for the time being, I don't see why we have to change.
- Eliot: I'm not going to change my vote, really, but I don't think it matters anymore.
- Noble: I agree with Murray that I think the present handling of the issue has been well done. You can argue whether the letter that went out to the members was straight down the line pro and con as it should have been, but at least everybody has been advised of issues on both sides. Whereas I personally don't think that we should have lady members, if the membership as a whole agrees that this is the appropriate stance, then I'm not going to resign either.
- Eliot: I don't see why a club in a city is required to cater to everybody in the city when they form a club to meet with their friends.
- Smith: It's an outrageous idea, but there you are. How do you like your Board of Supervisors? I don't believe that they're representative.
- Noble: My guess is that 95 or 98 percent of the voters in San Francisco couldn't give a damn.
- Peters: I don't like to say this, but I went to a couple of meetings where the representatives of the city were trying to put this over. There were speakers there, and they had a little sort of debate, each one. In my opinion, I had been in favor of permitting women members. After that meeting, and seeing who represented the women members and who represented the men members--you'll excuse me for saying this--I would be adamant against letting women in. Anyway, I think we have the privilege of that kind of a club. It's just a feeling; it's your feeling. You don't have to explain why your feeling is; I don't have to tell you why I love you; I just love you.
- McKeever: I guess if you blackballed a woman, you'd have to explain it.
- Smith: We're getting off of history, but just in response to that, what's happening is that they don't want you to be able to blackball any women or minority person. You can go ahead and blackball among your own group, as they see it, but you'd better just not do that with these other people. Those people have a right to be in your club; the rest of them may or may not have a right to be in your club. They don't care about that. There is a reverse discrimination thing going on--real clear.
- Eliot: I hope the Supreme Court of the United States is listening to us right now.



Memorable Club Events

- Jacobson: Let me switch gears a little bit. How about what is the most memorable club event in your mind?
- Smith: While these guys with great history behind them are thinking, mine is real easy: It's when we dedicated the new squash facility in 1976. Church, do you remember when the original squash courts were built?
- Peters: About 1929.
- Smith: It was quite amazing because they had to be the first squash courts in California and maybe on the West Coast.
- Peters: It had to be about 1928-29 because Covvy [Covington] Janin was a member then, and he was a great squash player. He was all for it; I was for it, but I left here in 1928. I think it was just about that time.
- Smith: The outside of those courts were designed by a famous architect. That architecture is obscured now by a big brick wall, but those were great courts, and anyway they were first on the West Coast. We opened the new courts in 1976 incorporating the old ones. We had an open night here, and George Skou was the president, and I had agreed to be squash chairman to start a new program to fill them up, as it were, which has worked out very nicely. I remember that evening.
- Sumner: I would say that that was the beginning of the decline because that was creating a powerful pressure group that had an interest other than in a social club. To them, the University Club was primarily an athletic club. The huge expansion of club facilities was accompanied by an expansion of the membership. This brought in members who didn't really have an interest in a social club, who treated it as an athletic club.
- McKeever: Were they the best squash courts in San Francisco?
- Smith: The new ones are.
- Eliot: Murray, why was that more momentous than Tom McGee, president from 1907-08, [Warren] Olney, 1908-10, [James W.] Byrne, 1910-11, then again 1911-12. Wasn't that when this clubhouse was built?
- Smith: Oh, absolutely, I was just talking while you guys were thinking of more historical examples.
- Peters: Were those good years?

Eliot: It was during somewhere in those administrations that the thought came to buy the Stanford stable and turn it into this club.

Peters: I can remember in the old days that the Tobins were great members at one time. Do you remember Cyril? Cyril was a member for a long time.

Noble: After J. O. [Joe Tobin] moved up the hill?

Peters: They wouldn't reserve a seat for him at that big table, and they said they couldn't reserve a seat for him at lunch; he would have to take his chance. So then he stopped lunching here, and he finally resigned from the club shortly thereafter. I remember the big story about the Tobins was that he and his brother, Joe, were great members of the club at one time. They took a piano one time and threw it out the window on California Street. I have never been able to get the facts on that.

Smith: I'll give you a small event which has come down in the history of the club because I'm reminded of it all the time. I drive an Alfa Romeo convertible, which I still have, and a number of years ago at an annual meeting, we were sitting at dinner and feeling very good and so on. The annual meeting had been completed, and the manager came over and said, "I need to talk to you for a moment." I said, "How about tomorrow?" He said, "No, we need to talk right now."

So I went out in the elevator lobby, and he said, "I want to take you downstairs into the alley," and I said, "Okay," and so we went down there, and my car was parked down there in the alley, on the club side of the alley. It was pretty much a mess, and what had happened was that one of the members had been sitting at the corner table in the dining room and didn't like his dinner, so he took it and tossed the plate and all out the window, out the open door and managed to hit the top of my convertible. The dinner was veal in white cream sauce. He not only broke the windshield, but he pretty well did in the top with the veal in white cream sauce.

Peters: I was sitting at the same table. I felt that he should have been asked to resign from the club.

Smith: Well, it created quite a flap, and I didn't give him a really hard time about it. I dealt with his insurance company for a while, and I got a new windshield and a new top.

Noble: I used to, in the old days, enjoy Election Day here because it was against the law to sell liquor on Election Day. The club would give away booze on Election Day. You'd come in the library and they had the bar and you drank all you wanted. But the club didn't have to hire a bartender because you poured your own



Noble: drinks. Because so many people poured so many drinks, they were really hungry. The club lost a little money on the booze, but they made a huge amount of money on the extra number of lunches that they sold. The club was never more convivial.

Eliot: I always came here on Election Day.

McKeever: Anybody remember a football player named Ingram?

Peters: The Ingrams were great football players at the Navy and coached California. One of them was a member of the Olympic Club here.

McKeever: Ingram used to put on a pre-performance of the California/Stanford game. He filled the bar, and he would talk and on the blackboard he would explain the rushes and pass position and things. It was a wonderful performance. When he was all through, he convinced everybody that Cal, whom he was coaching, was going to win. Well, he turned the blackboard upside down, and it turned out to be a rather accurate picture of an Indian mounting a bear. [laughing] It was unforgettable. They took the Cal/Stanford game awfully seriously then.

Eliot: Now did you get the answer to that one?

Jacobson: Yes, that's wonderful. What about the most disastrous club event?

Peters: Gee, burning the mortgage.

Eliot: That's one of them; the other was World War II, I guess.

McKeever: Who was managing the club then?

Jacobson: Schaeffer?

McKeever: He robbed this club blind.

Noble: Schaeffer was the supreme sergeant. He was manager for quite some time, and he ruled this place with an iron hand.

Eliot: He sure did.

McKeever: All the suppliers had to pay him off to deliver to [the club].

Sumner: He was putting people on the board, influencing who was elected president.

Eliot: He did the works.

Noble: He may have been a thief, but the club did hold together.

- Eliot: Well, Chauncey, it was you who used to say, in favor of Schaeffer, that he used to be a member of the hotel and restaurant employees union. He knew all the union rules, and he kept us out of trouble.
- McKeever: The man would steal anything that wasn't nailed down. Of course, he stole things that were nailed down. We're finding out now that he got paid his usual commission. There was construction in the basement where he put fire sprinklers in. It was all passed by the city, and now they go down, they pull the switches out, and they're not connected to anything at all.
- Eliot: We never had any labor trouble with him.
- McKeever: No, we never had any labor trouble at all. The inspectors were paid off.
- Eliot: Well, that wasn't a catastrophe really. Schaeffer's folly was something, too.
- Peters: Do you think anything should be mentioned of the episode in which the board of directors made an agreement with Mr. Swig? The end of that was that Henry Hardy and myself and one of the directors (I forget what his name was--he was a proponent, and we were opponents) had a meeting with Mr. Swig at his office over in the Fairmont and had to tell him that the feeling of the University Club, of all the members, was so great against the agreement that had been made to him by the directors that we were going to give it up.
- Noble: The issue was the air rights of the club.
- Peters: Of course, the main thing was that we were going to buy this place next door, and we were going to pay for it jointly with the Fairmont. After twenty-five years, the Fairmont had the authority to say what would be done with it in spite of the fact that the University Club had put up half the money. Henry Hardy and I, and I forget the other member's name, went over.

You go into his office, and he had all these honorary appointments as Doctor of this and that from various colleges and universities. It clothed him in an aura of honor intellectually. The rumor was that he was very close to many unions and he would get the money from them and give it to the colleges, and he'd be given the honor of doing it. We were faced with all these distinctions. "Well, you know," he said, "you have a fine club there. I wish I could be a member, but I never could have been a member." What he inferred was, we thought, because he was Jewish, and we weren't taking any at that time, which we are now.

Peters: So I said, "Well, why not, Mr. Swig?" He said, "I was a dropout from high school; I could never get in." Henry Hardy said, "Well, Mr. Swig, that wouldn't have prevented you because 10 percent of our members don't have to go to a university." That ended that conversation.

Then we brought him over here and gave him a martini. We told him the University Club would not play on that basis. He said, "You are making a great mistake, but I'll go along with what you say." The matter was dropped and the club saved from a very dangerous contract.

Eliot: One of the better things that happened, all for the wrong reasons, was when I was on the board. Ducournau was president. There was a move on by some realtors to buy all the houses south of our line, all the way down to Stockton, and put up a great big highrise to completely block our view. Ducournau and our agent were buying that little house on Joice Street to stop them--right in the middle where they wanted to put the skyscraper. We bought it to protect our view, but none of us (and this must have been 1957 or somewhere around there) imagined that downtown skyscrapers would block it in any event. That turned out pretty well, as a matter of fact; I think that little place has always made money for us, hasn't it?

Sumner: At least break even. We sure bought it at the right time. Prices went through the roof after we bought it; it's a very valuable piece of property that we bought, I guess, at just the right time.

McKeever: The rent on it is very high.

Sumner: Perhaps now. It wasn't for many years. It was a dump for many years. It was fixed up, what, I guess when you were president, Murray?

Smith: Yes, we upgraded it. It's okay, it makes money; I have mixed emotions about it. It doesn't give us a good return on our investment. It has other things.

### Managers

Jacobson: What about the best club manager that the University Club has had?

Smith: That's a very easy question to answer.

Eliot: I think so too. It's the one we have right now.



- Smith: I don't think you had professional managers back in the early years of the club; I don't know whether you did or didn't. The guy that we have now is just a fine man.
- Jacobson: Desmond Elder?
- Smith: Yes. It's an interesting thing when Schaeffer, I guess, was retired, and he was followed by the guy who was his number-two choice, and that man was not really qualified to run the club. That became apparent, and at that point, we put together a selection committee which had some board members on it, and we did a nationwide search--boiled it down to, as I recall, seven finalists. They were all qualified. The guy we picked was head and shoulders above them. He is a fine manager.
- Eliot: Actually, I would have put Paul Thompson as number two.
- Noble: He was maitre d' here. Then he went to that place outside Sacramento. Then he ended up at the Francesca Club, where they think he's a crackerjack, because he is.
- McKeever: The Francesca Club wouldn't let him go.
- Sumner: I would think they're right.
- Jacobson: Why was Paul Thompson such a fine man?
- Noble: He was a very, very nice man who knew how to run things and how to deal with the staff.
- Eliot: He has been running the Francesca Club for years.
- Jacobson: What made him such a good maitre d'?
- McKeever: He was extremely pleasant to people. Everything ran smoothly. He knew how to handle all kinds of labor; he knew how to buy; he had all the qualities of a very good manager.
- Sumner: More than that, I think he had the same ability that Desmond has of communicating somehow to the members that he is really interested in the club.
- Eliot: And unruffled.
- Smith: That's kind of a big part of trying to pull off being a manager.
- Sumner: Well, a club is an extension of home. People take a very deep and personal interest in it. I think the supervisors in San Francisco were rather surprised at the vehemence of some of the objections they received when they enacted this ordinance, in effect controlling club membership. It in effect says any club that has

Sumner: more than 400 members and meets other qualifications is hereby declared to be a place of public business. It's getting into the other aspects of what's your private life and what you thought was your private life that is subject to control by the authorities.

Remember the Nuremberg laws in Nazi Germany for bad people who admit Jews to clubs. Well, we have the mirror image. We were required to admit certain people. Just as outrageous to my mind, but I'm out of step with these guys.

Peters: We were helpful in initiating the existence of the University Club of Palo Alto, and I have a letter in here from the president of the University Club of Palo Alto thanking me for attending their dinner, expressing regrets that Mrs. Peters couldn't come, because she was sick, and saying that the University Club here had been a great help and was starting them off on a career. I haven't followed it up, and I don't know whether they are still in existence, but I think they are.

Smith: I think we have a reciprocal deal with them now; we had a period of time when we didn't. It's a nice club.

Sumner: The reciprocal arrangement with the University Club of Palo Alto fell afoul of the fact that many of their members were using the squash courts here on a reciprocal basis, and they had no comparable facilities. They were crowding into the courts. So the reciprocal arrangement was dropped and then reestablished, I believe, with the understanding that they couldn't use the squash courts; they could use the clubhouse. I'm pulling something out of my memory.

### Bartenders

Jacobson: What about the best bartender?

McKeever: The first one was Hong. He was from 1910-1950. He lived forever. Then came Tom. Last came George, who was bartender ten years; he retired last summer.

Sumner: Of those pictures in there, which is Hong, and which is Tom?

McKeever: Hong is at the Round Table. Tom is in several pictures.

Smith: There have really only been three over all that time.

Eliot: Hong was bartender for many, many years. Hong was here into the fifties. What was the name of the portrait painter? You remember him; he lived in Marin.



Jacobson: Moya del Pino?

McKeever: Moya del Pino did the one of Hong, and Jerry Gouch did the one of Tom. The last one was by a girl called Suzanne Siminger, who did the pictures on the wall of George Jang.

Peters: A couple of bad persons have said to me that they don't think it's appropriate for the club to have a picture of the bartender on the wall. They think that it is undignified for the club to have that. I think it's a great thing.

Eliot: I think it's marvelous as long as it stays upstairs. Has George's portrait been painted?

Smith: It's there. It's on that wall.

Eliot: I hope Hoy [Wong] will join that group.

Peters: Chauncey, I don't want to be quoted, but I think there is some movement under way to eliminate those.  
[Noble and Sumner depart]  
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Eliot: They want to put Carol Doda's portrait up here instead.

Peters: I don't know who has the authority for putting up pictures--I don't think anybody has. I think it's sort of a helter-skelter basis.

Jacobson: Was Hong a friendly sort of bartender?

McKeever: Hong was the best one.

Smith: I can't speak for the first two. George was not--it is hard to describe this kind of employee, but this club has a tradition of oriental employees in a family. They're not friendly in the sense that, I think, you asked the question. That isn't really the word to describe it.

Jacobson: How would you describe it?

Smith: I'm not sure, but that isn't the word.

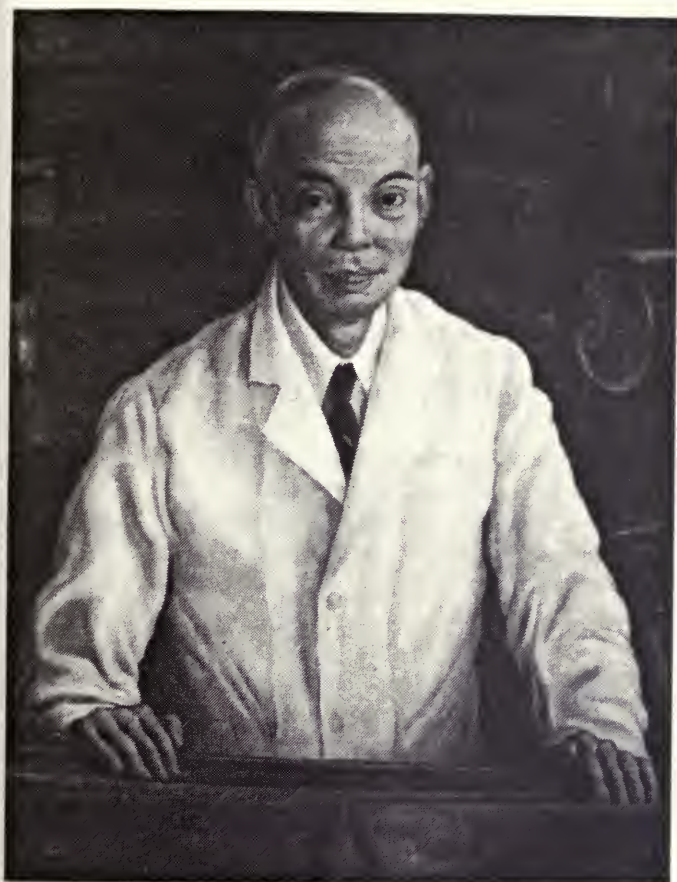
McKeever: Remember Clay Miller? He lived in this town as a widower, and he brought his own servant here, who was a Chinese. He was a Wong-tong, and pretty soon the Hong-tong was eased out by Miller's Chinese man. When Hong died, the Chinese were very upset, and when they went to Hong's funeral, they borrowed the club portrait.

Eliot: I remember that. On the way to the cemetery, they held up Hong's portrait in the open limousine.

- Smith: They are typically taciturn; they knew everybody individually.
- Peters: They knew names; they knew member's names.
- Eliot: It was always "Mister so and so." I remember Hong, I think, trying to do his accounting in English, we'll say, and then he'd get the abacus out.
- Smith: George did his accounts with an abacus every afternoon.

### Club Traditions

- Jacobson: What about any traditions that are no longer observed that would be worth preserving.
- Smith: The biggest one is the One-and-a-Half Night, which has kind of died.
- McKeever: It used to be free cocktails on a Tuesday night.
- Eliot: Somebody tell me; I'm not sure where the name One-and-a-Half originated and what does it actually mean.
- McKeever: I can tell you. You have to go to the bar to see this. They had a fifteen-cent drink that held one and a half ounces. Then they had a champagne glass which was a double. The champagne glass would just get warm while you were carrying it around and talking, so they decided they wanted something halfway in between the two. So while this was fifteen cents and the other was thirty cents, they decided on the one and a half, which was precisely half the volume capacity in each glass. They put the costs together and divided by two. It now costs about \$1.50, \$2.50. People didn't like the champagne glass; it was way too much.
- Eliot: I bought a one-and-one-half jigger, and I never knew whether the line that's on the jigger indicates one and a half ounces?
- Peters: It's the straight one ounce. I have one too--UC on it?
- Jacobson: What about any other traditions that are no longer?
- Smith: That one, understand, still remains to the extent that you can walk to the bar, as several people did today, and order a One-and-a-Half. You will get one. But there was a One-and-a-Half Party once a month. It is in a sense because the Admissions Committee meets once a month and talks to new members, and they call it a One-and-a-Half Party.



Bartenders Hong, left, and George Wong, right. The portraits hang in the fourth-floor bar.





McKeever: There is no objection to One-and-a-Half Parties. I know that once I was coming up California Street cable car, hanging on, and a couple of young fellows said, "There's free booze at the University Club. Let's head over there to Powell Street." They went up to the bar and so on, and they sat there and took two or three One-and-a-Halves and went off. Soon word got around that there was a free party, and we put a stop to that.

Eliot: While we are on the subject of liquor, I think another thing we all still do and certainly have from the time I joined in, is roll dice for drinks. At the Round Table, we would roll dice to the thirteenth ace. Whoever landed on the thirteenth ace had to pay the drinks for everybody at the table. That's been going on for many, many years, decades.

Jacobson: Is that still going on?

Eliot: It's rarer than it was. I don't go to the Round Table as much as I used to. That was a hazardous game, but it was fun though. Then we made it easier. We had the cup, and you put quarters in if you didn't roll an ace.

#### Committee of Past Presidents

Jacobson: What about issues that have been taken up by the Committee of Past Presidents?

Smith: The Committee of Past Presidents hasn't really worked. I started it when I was president.

Eliot: Now wait a minute, Murray. Yes, you did, and I'm glad you did, too.

Smith: We have had a few meetings.

McKeever: This one.

Smith: This is a meeting for a specific purpose, but the meetings for the Committee of Past Presidents when it really was a committee didn't really--

Eliot: I disagree with you. Let's go back when virtually all the other clubs stopped giving dinner. At the Committee of Past Presidents, the suggestion was made, "Well, let's invite members of the Pacific Union, the Family, the Concordia, and the rest of them to come and have dinner anytime at the University Club."



Smith: I'm not saying that no good ideas came out of it, but there hasn't really been a standing committee in the end. That was the intention, that it would be a standing committee and would meet a couple times a year, address itself to policy issues. That hasn't really happened.

Jacobson: Was there any particular event that gave you the idea to start that committee?

Smith: To tell you the truth, it was suggested to me by the manager. He came to me during the time I was president, and he said, "You know, you've got all this talent around the club with people who have been president, and they know a lot about the activities and the organization, and once you are no longer president, you sort of fade away into the wings. Nobody taps that experience." That was true. I agreed with him, and so I proposed to the board, and the board agreed that we would create a past presidents' committee. We did that, and I was the first chairman because I was the first ex-president.

We met a couple of times, but it hasn't really produced what the idea was; it hasn't been pursued. I thought it was a good idea; I still do.

Eliot: I thought that part I just mentioned was a damn good idea. I think it originated there.

Smith: I think you're right, Ted, and I think that if the committee met on a regular basis a couple times a year, or four times a year, those kinds of ideas would come out of it. That was the idea, but it hasn't really been done. When was the last time we had a meeting?

Eliot: That idea probably went further than what I have said. I'm guessing now. It was based on the fact that when we close down the club in August in order to do interior repairs and so forth, the Concordia and the Family Club have said, "Come on over and have lunch with us."

McKeever: Do we sit them here?

Smith: Well, we do. When the Concordia Club burned, we said, "Come on over and be our guests." So yes, sure, things worked out.

Peters: Have we had many people from them come over here?

Smith: During the time that they didn't have a club, we had a lot of people.

Eliot: Not much now.

- Smith: That's a nice club; they have good people. I haven't looked into it lately, but over the last ten years, we have had a lot of people come here from the P.U. Club and the Bohemian Club.
- Eliot: I have always thought we could push it a little more, have them use this club for dinner.
- Smith: You are right; I think it's a good idea, and I think it probably did originate there.
- Jacobson: The other clubs haven't been serving dinner for what reason?
- Eliot: They have shut down.
- Smith: It's based on economics. We lose money on keeping our dining room open. We have chosen to do it.
- Jacobson: Even with the other clubs eating here?
- Smith: Oh, they don't make that much difference.
- Jacobson: I understand the committee didn't meet very often, but were there any other things that came up and decisions that the committee arrived at?
- Smith: Well, that committee accepted the responsibility for doing what you are doing, the history project.
- Eliot: At past presidents' luncheons, I always thought that the president at that time used us as a sounding board to try to get our feelings regarding contentious issues that the board might be faced with. Is that a fair assumption?
- Smith: Sure. That was one of the ideas about it. I continue to think it's a good idea. It just hasn't been pursued very often.

### Labor Relations

- Jacobson: To what extent would you say the University Club has been in consultation with some of the other local private men's clubs about any issues affecting clubs in general?
- Smith: Major. When I was president, we had a major confrontation coming up with the union. We deal with Local 2 as do all hotels and restaurants, and Local 2 is a real tough union to deal with. They're not well managed.

- Smith: At the time I was president, Bill and I were facing this, and I communicated with every other club president in the city about the upcoming situation. We had a number of presidents' meetings. We had one at the World Trade Club, and we had one at the Olympic Club, and I think that continues. I don't know about the past, whether club presidents communicated much or not, but I think at the moment, for the last ten years, it has been a lot.
- Jacobson: Is the San Francisco Club Institute something that the clubs belong to?
- Smith: The clubs belong to it, but that's really an organization of managers.
- Eliot: Does that include the women's clubs, too?
- Smith: Yes.
- Jacobson: Has that been at all valuable to the club?
- Smith: Oh, I think so, but it is really more of a manager's forum where the professionals meet. I don't know. It's the employers' group, contra to the union. That's about the situation, too, we're contras, not supported by anybody else.

Some folks resigned from the [San Francisco] Club Institute during that labor dispute seven or eight years ago. The Olympic Club, as I recall, dropped out and negotiated their own union deal, which was a giveaway. The Club Institute has less members now than it did ten years ago.

- Jacobson: Why have so many club members resigned from it?
- Smith: Basically over a disagreement as to how to deal with the union. Some folks don't want any waves. Whatever the union proposes, they will say fine, pay them what they want. And others, this club included, see that as cost control and management control, and prefer to try and maintain some kind of control over it. There is a difference in viewpoint.

#### Distinguishing Characteristics of the University Club

- Jacobson: While we are on the subject of other clubs, what would you say makes the University Club different from some of the other ones?
- McKeever: May I suggest one? It has no direction at all. It is not in favor of or against anything; it's strictly a club. We enjoy each other's company, we eat and drink together; there is no objective. It's not trying to promote the arts like the Bohemian Club. It's not trying to be a religious sect, such as others.



McKeever: That is the uniqueness of the club, its lack of direction. It's simply an association where we enjoy each other's company.

Eliot: I think the University Club attracts many more young men aged twenty-five to thirty-five than most of the other clubs, and with that goes one handicap: They are more apt to be moved by their employers to other parts of the country so that there's a constant turnover. Nevertheless, I think we have a much greater number of young men than most of the other clubs.

Peters: I think that's true, and I think you might say that the University Club, maybe because of that, is more purely social than these other clubs where you join for some business reasons, and political reasons. I think the University Club is really the most purely social club there is in the city for men.

Smith: Yes, I agree with that and along with it, I happen to think that the ambience, the food, the surroundings and everything are nicer than the other clubs. That's my personal taste. I would far rather have lunch or dinner here than I would in any of the other clubs. We have made more effort to have a fine chef, and we have by far the best food; there's no question about that.

Peters: You feel less pressure; you start thinking it's more home-like than dining with somebody who is a great artist or a great political figure or a great member of a business venture.

McKeever: I had an occasion when a banker friend asked me to the Bohemian Club, and I went there. It has been many years ago. We were just talking, chatting. I said, "I just have a letter from my sister in Switzerland. It's very interesting." He said, "Put it away. Put it away." I said, "What do you mean, I want to show you--" "Put it away." So I put it back and said, "Why?" He said, "People will think we are talking business." I said, "I know what you mean, 'Weaving spiders come not here' and so forth."

Smith: Well, we do that, too.

Eliot: Yes, I'll say we do.

McKeever: I think it's rather negative for the idea of social ambience when you can't talk about letters from home.

Smith: You're not supposed to bring out business papers here. I would suggest that that was probably bad judgment on your friend's part and that you ought to be able bring out a personal letter there or here.

McKeever: I remember coming here one time when you couldn't talk over the sound of the snap of briefcases, and people had papers piled up two feet high on each side of their chairs on the fourth floor, right here in the bar.

Eliot: I used to call the managers office, "Paul, send somebody up here and stop it."

Lisa, I think one of the answers to your question is also, without naming other clubs, that there are a few members of the University Club who are also members of other clubs in the city. I think that the reason that they continue to be a member of the club here is for the ambience. It's more informal. They can let down their hair a little bit, and it's not so rigid, and I think they enjoy the atmosphere here.

Smith: Over the years, I have played bridge here a lot at noon with a group of people, probably ten or fifteen people, and I would say that almost everyone of them, including myself, belong to other clubs.

Eliot: A number of our domino group are members of other clubs, too.

Smith: They come here because the food is better, fresher, the ambience, or whatever is a better situation.

Eliot: If we made as much noise as we do in playing dominos on Tuesday as your crowd does playing bridge on Tuesday at some of those other clubs, we would have been stared at. [laughter]

### Newer Traditions

Jacobson: Is there anything in the club's past that you wish it had now?

Peters: Well, I wish it had the momentum that we had in the old days on a very friendly basis, a very social ambience. I mean when we had the minstrel shows. I think that element was desirable. On the other hand, now when I say that, we are having more social events--dancing, prize fights. I'm not up-to-date on that because I don't get around as much as I used to. I don't know.

Smith: One thing you ought to be aware of is these Boxing Nights that we do in June. Years ago, the minor leagues of prize fighting, what they call club smokers and young prize fighters, would go and fight in private clubs. That died out. Television took over boxing, and a lot of things have happened. Probably ten years ago, some young members here said, "Let's see if we can redo club smokers, club fighting."

Smith: For probably the last ten years, we have had a Boxing Night for amateur fighters, not pro. We clean out the main reading room on the fourth floor, put up a big ring, have a promoter, and he brings in amateur boxers. It's a big deal. People put on their dinner jackets, have dinner, and smoke cigars (which is where the



Smith: smoker thing came from originally). That's becoming a new tradition in the club. The Olympic Club has done it for the last four or five years now, taking over the same idea from us. It's kind of a nice thing.

Jacobson: Are there other traditions like that that have been picked up from the University Club and adopted by another club?

McKeever: I think Music Night is a wonderful tradition where we have dinner accompanied by a string quartet. The musicians play before the first course, and then they rest while we eat the soup. Then they play again for for ten or fifteen minutes, and another course is served. They were absolutely delightful musicians, first rate. The music was good, the food was excellent. It was one of the most pleasant evenings of my life.

Smith: It's becoming a fixture here, and that was picked up by one of our members from the San Francisco Symphony Foundation. That was originally, still is, a Symphony Foundation fundraiser. He said, "We're nice to them, let's do it here." It's a very nice event.

Eliot: There's one thing I do like which was started--I don't know if it was ten years ago--and that is the Henry Hardy Gallery, the hall right here with the various art exhibits. I enjoy that. I think also--although I have not used it, I've been tempted to, and I don't know why I don't use it-- the lending library is a good idea. I don't know how much it is used.

Jacobson: What is the lending library?

McKeever: Books lying around. You can take them out, sign for them, and bring them back.

Smith: It's a little more than that. There's an Arts and Literature Committee here, and among other things, they make an effort to get new books. They buy them and make them available. Probably mostly best sellers, but other things. Take a look; you'll see what the mix is. It's in the reading room.

McKeever: The library is full of nineteenth-century Californiana, very valuable indeed.

Smith: You might want to look into that; that library was re-catalogued a few years ago, and there are some fairly valuable collections of books in there. There might be some interesting stories in there about particular sets of books.



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Ignazio J. Ruvo

The University Club of San Francisco:  
One Hundred Years of Tradition and Change

An interview Conducted by  
Lisa Jacobson  
in 1987



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## IGNAZIO RUVOLO

Born in Elizabeth, New Jersey, in 1947, Ignazio Ruvolo received his bachelor's degree from Rutgers College in 1969 and his J.D. from University of San Diego School of Law in 1972. An attorney practicing in San Francisco, Mr. Ruvolo joined the University Club in 1979. He served as president in 1988-89.



BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name IGNAZIO JOHN RUVOLO

Date of birth JUNE 24, 1947 Birthplace ELIZABETH, N.J.

Father's full name VINCENT RUVOLO

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ Birthplace ELIZABETH, N.J.

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Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ Birthplace SCRANTON, PA.

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Occupation(s) ATTORNEY

Areas of expertise CIVIL LITIGATION & TRIAL WORK

Other interests or activities SAILING, FISHING, OPERA, WINE COLLECTING (and drinking)

Organizations in which you are active University Club of S.F.; Saint Francis Yacht Club; various bar associations & professional affiliations





## I UNIVERSITY CLUB

[Interview 1: October 5, 1988]##

Events Leading Up to Bylaws Change

Jacobson: I want to record your recollections about the events and the debate that followed the Board of Supervisors' approval of the anti-discrimination ordinance and the June Supreme Court decision. Maybe we can start with your giving me a chronology.

Ruvolo: Actually, the debate began quite some time ago when Malcolm Post left the presidency and handed the baton to Murray Fox. Following the annual meeting that year, a committee was formed to issue a report to assist our members in deciding whether women should be allowed to become members of the club. The report was to include a statement of views both pro and con based on economic, social, political and legal considerations of the issue. Alan Strand and I were designated co-chairs of that committee. In addition, Malcolm Post was on that committee, as were Dwight Simpson, Owen O'Donnell, Bill Sumner, and Phil Armour.

We had several meetings. I had accumulated a substantial amount of material as to what other clubs were doing and the status of the shifting legal climate. I was asked to try a hand at the first draft of a report that would discuss both sides of the issue. It became obvious that the process would be better served by having proponents for either side write a position paper favoring that side and that this would allow the members to choose between them. We went about it that way and I guess it was in the last quarter of 1987, if I remember correctly, that we finally produced two position papers, one in favor of changing the bylaws to allow women members, and the other in favor of keeping the club all male.

There was very little editing done by Alan or me of those position papers because we did not want to frustrate what we considered to be a true expression of freedom of speech on the issue. We only reviewed them to determine that they were factually accurate. We then went ahead and we issued the two papers with a ballot. There were also two forums that were held for the members to debate the issue and to ask questions. There was quite a bit of participation among the members.

Although several directors wanted to defer a vote until after the U. S. Supreme Court decided the New York University Club case, a vote was taken. The proposal that we change the bylaws to allow women members was defeated by about 40 votes.

Jacobson: Did most of the members participate in voting at this particular time?

Ruvolo: I can't remember the turnout percentage. There certainly were not as many people voting that time as there were in July and August of this year.

After that vote, as we entered 1988, the matter continued to receive a substantial amount of attention from the board of directors and Murray Fox who was then the president. There continued to be a significant threat of prosecution under the new San Francisco ordinance if we didn't change. Also, the restriction of alcohol beverage licenses for private clubs that discriminated was gaining steam in the state legislature and the legislature had already eliminated state tax business deductions. In that political climate was also, of course, the pendency of the Supreme Court decision, which our legal counsel told us would be decided in the early summer months.

The board of directors received a good deal of correspondence from members who wanted us to take up the issue again at the earliest opportunity. It was agreed in the spring--this was several months after the first vote--that further consideration of the question would be deferred until the U.S. Supreme Court had decided the New York University Club case.

I then became president in May of 1988, and shortly after that the Supreme Court handed down its decision in the New York case. The opinion appeared to have significant repercussions for ordinances around the country similar to that which was enacted in New York, including San Francisco. The board appointed a two-person subcommittee of Kirk Miller and Bob Morris to prepare the new ballot and an information sheet describing the recent Supreme Court opinion.

When we received their draft, it was sent to legal counsel for the club and edited for accuracy by him. We then took the edited information sheet and the ballot and sent it to the members. I was on my sabbatical leave at the time, but it was supervised by staff, including the club manager. The ballots were returned by approximately 89 percent of the eligible voters, which in any type of election is a considerable return percentage.

Before we opened the ballots, we received complaints from some members who felt that there were some irregularities with the voting procedure and that there was a substantial chance that the result was prejudiced by these irregularities. There was some editing of the ballot materials that were supposed to have been included which did not get into the final draft. There was also a meeting that we had scheduled at the request of the "pro-women" people to air their view, but the request for the meeting was withdrawn by the people who requested it once we agreed to put the matter up for vote. The ballot was to have had two envelopes with it: one for the members to put their ballots in and another for the members to return their ballot, but only one envelope was actually sent.

The board, after discussing the complaints thoroughly, felt they did not justify the conclusion that the election should be invalidated, or that members on either side of the issue had been deprived of due process. Important to our consideration was the fact that not one member came forward and stated that he had been misled or misunderstood what he was voting on or that he was misinformed or uninformed about the propositions. This evidence was of considerable moment to us.

There were two propositions on the ballot; one was a vote to change the bylaws and one was a vote to privatize the club. We realized that if we did not vote to open up the membership in accordance with the Supreme Court opinion, the only way we were going to avoid the future legal entanglements with the city would be if we privatized. I won't get into the details of that, but it basically involves conforming club operations to an exception to the San Francisco ordinance under which we would not have to comply with its non-discriminatory requirement.

The board was divided as to what to do. We asked the auditors to open the ballots. However, in opening the ballots we wanted the auditors to ensure that the integrity of the ballots was preserved so that if there was ever any legal challenge to the election, we had a proper record. We also asked that they not tell us which proposition won. We only wanted to know the relative percentages of votes so we could evaluate how close it was and whether that would be of some value to us in determining the underlying fairness of the vote.

We received that information in time for our meeting in late August, and it was apparent that one side of this issue had won by a significant vote. If you consider the returned votes as one hundred percent, twenty percent voted for one proposition and eighty percent voted for the other. Based on all of the information available to the board, we concluded that, as I said earlier, there was due process, that the election was fair, and therefore the board validated the election. Then we asked the



auditors to send us the final balloting results. The members had voted in favor of changing the bylaws to allow women members. We instructed club counsel to prepare the necessary bylaw changes, which the board members passed, I believe it was, last week.

Jacobson: How do the bylaws now read? Were they simple changes?

Ruvolo: All we did was make them gender neutral. There was not any other discriminatory language in the bylaws of the club. We had no religious, nationality, or racial restrictions in our bylaws.

So, it was really an easy matter. We just went through them and where it said "men" we either changed it to say "member" or used the ubiquitous "gentleperson."

#### Arguments Pro and Con

Jacobson: I'm wondering if you can summarize for me some of the arguments that were advanced in favor of opening up the club to women and some that were advanced in opposition.

Ruvolo: They literally crossed all of the disciplines that I mentioned earlier. Let's take it from the pro-women viewpoint. From the legal point of view there was the practical concern expressed that the club was facing a losing battle on the legal front in that if we did not vote to change, we would have to privatize. It was their belief that privatization was not an acceptable alternative because it would substantially impact the club financially. It was argued that privatization would require us to stop holding private parties, and it would inhibit our ability to rent our sleeping rooms to non-members. Also, there was the concern expressed about the club's liquor license standing and the legal expense that we would have to bear if we chose to fight the ordinance, particularly in face of the Supreme Court's ruling.

In addition to that there was the strong social view expressed that America had entered a new era and that in today's society there is no place for a club which limits its membership to any particular sexual, racial, or religious group other than purely fraternal organizations. Women were such an integral part of our social, business and professional fabric now that we could not justify denying them membership. They considered it nonsense to maintain the anachronistic practice of having a men-only club.

The other side of the issue argued that business changes should not dictate to social customs. There was still a strong social interest in having an outlet where men could be with men and women could be with women and we could pursue goals that were singularly of interest to either sex. There were things that men liked to do together, and there was an atmosphere of fellowship which would be compromised by having women members. So, the ones who wanted to keep the club traditional felt that there was a strong social interest in allowing the club to continue in that vein.

The traditionalists also believed we could privatize. They also vigorously expressed the view that it would not be economically ruinous, when, on balance, one considers the possible increase in capital expenses necessary to allow women to be members of the club.

Jacobson: What kind of increased capital expenses would be necessary to accommodate women members?

Ruvolo: We never got down to dollars and cents, but obviously we have athletic facilities that have to be considered and whether any modifications need to be made in those facilities in order to accommodate privacy. We have restrooms for women in the club already so I don't think that's a significant issue. It was not clearly articulated what precise capital expenditures would be necessary. Maybe they were referring to changes in programming, retooling the club for women's taste. I don't know.

Jacobson: In assessing the economic cost of privatization would the club not lose revenue and bear some additional expenses in running the club?

Ruvolo: The biggest problem we had in tackling this entire issue was in developing economic projections which the board felt comfortable putting its imprimatur on. We had the matter looked at by our past treasurer and current treasurer. There were groups of concerned members who made various economic projections to the board, and we felt that the underpinnings for all those projections were too speculative. In other words, the underlying factual assumptions were speculative. We knew what we had to do to privatize, but we did not feel comfortable that we could project what the economic consequences would be.

Jacobson: To privatize, wouldn't the club have to eliminate room rentals and use of the club by private groups?

Ruvolo: Not eliminate room rentals but restrict availability of room rentals. There was a view expressed, again getting back to the assumptions made that if the club maintained its male-only status, we would become more attractive, not less attractive, to



prospective members. If all the other clubs opened their doors to women members, we would be able to make up any shortfall in revenue from loss of private parties and room rentals, by increased revenues from increased membership fees caused by increased membership. So, that gives you an idea of how these arguments can come around the other way.

Jacobson: Is there any way to characterize which members tended to favor and which members tended to oppose the change in bylaws?

Ruvolo: No. Absolutely not. There were people on both sides of that issue of all ages and of all professions. It was not one group against the other.

### Alternatives Considered

Jacobson: Were there any other alternatives considered other than privatization or opening it to women?

Ruvolo: Yes. We considered a suggestion that we become a proprietary club—that is members, in effect, buy into the club and become shareholders. It was believed that it would take us outside the San Francisco ordinance and we would basically just have a place where shareholders would go and have a good time. We also considered a merger with San Francisco all-women's clubs. There are three or four clubs in town that are women-only. The subject was discussed when Malcolm Post was president and then again when Murray Fox was president. The women's clubs were not interested.

Jacobson: What do you think accounted for the change in the vote from January to August? What do you think were the critical factors?

Ruvolo: All I can say is that I understand the objective pros and cons of the debate. It's impossible for me to divine why people voted a specific way. If you look at what happened between January and July a limited number of things occurred. Number one, the Supreme Court ruled on the New York University Club case upholding that ordinance, from which San Francisco ordinance was modeled. Also there was increased public pronouncements from the city attorney's office that they would not relent in moving against private clubs which did not comply with the ordinance. Those were the two political events. There was also increased lobbying in Sacramento about the liquor license issue, but I'm really not sure whether the members were aware of that. So, I can't say what motivated people to change on the individual basis. All I can say is that those were the objective events which occurred which might have had an influence beyond perhaps a change of heart based upon the appeals of friends or business associates.

Jacobson: Were there any resignations from the club?

Ruvolo: During the process, we have had some resignations. There were people who resigned because we did not change. There were a few people who resigned because we weren't acting fast enough to change and they were sick of the whole process. And then there were one or two people who resigned as a result of the change.

Jacobson: How many resignations in total?

Ruvolo: I would say less than twenty all together.

Jacobson: Did the basement renovations that the club has been doing enter into considerations about the financial feasibility of privatization?

Ruvolo: There was definitely a view expressed that if we lost revenue from private parties, it would impact our income stream projected from those basement renovations. That revenue was expected to help pay off the debt incurred to finance the renovations. On the other hand, there were those who felt that the basement really was not a hostage to the issue. So there were both sides, and again, it blended into this whole matrix of economic projections which we were never satisfied could have properly been made.##

We were never comfortable that the factual assumptions made were valid.

#### Integrating New Women Members

Jacobson: How does the club plan to integrate new women members?

Ruvolo: The view of my committee chairmen, the House Committee, which basically is the committee of all the committee chairmen, and the board of directors is that we offer an opportunity of belonging to a traditional social club in San Francisco to all people. There's no reason we can't continue to do that. There's certainly a market for men and women who wish to join something more than a business lunch club. Our members want to keep the character of the club the same as it has been for the last 98 years. We feel that we can do that and attract professional business and social leaders who are women as well as we have attracted men for years.

Jacobson: Does the club have any women lined up as prospective members?

Ruvolo: As far as I know, there have been no membership applications for women submitted yet. I know that current members have women who they feel would be good additions to the club. I've not heard any names mentioned.

Jacobson: Do you envision this change opening things up more?

Ruvolo: What do you mean opening?

Jacobson: Is it a blow to the "old boys' network"?

Ruvolo: Not at all. What I've tried to do is I've strived to be as objective as I can about the whole process. One of the things that has been interesting to me has been the mistaken belief among women's groups that we are all sending each other business up at the University Club. I sometimes use the club, personally, to take my clients to lunch, but that opportunity is no different from anyone taking his or her client to Jack's or another great restaurant for a lunch-business meeting. Where I disagree with the proponents of the "old boys' network", at least as far as our club goes, is the false perception that we are up there wining and dining each other and putting the arm on each other for business. I really believe anyone who is aggressive in that way would become a pariah. I don't believe that there is an "old boys' network" beyond our social bonds.

Being a lawyer, I can appreciate that argument had to be made in order to overcome the constitutional arguments in favor of the freedom of association. Whether the proponents really had ammunition to back up that perception in our case is doubtful.

Jacobson: Are there any plans to preserve some of the men-only feel of the club or is that totally going to be abandoned?

Ruvolo: By that you mean if we're going to have a men's grill or something like that where membership will be restricted--no. We're committed to opening up our facility to all of our members without any limitations. In terms of the ambience of the club, as I mentioned earlier, there is a strongly held belief that one of the attractions of our club to anybody is its current ambience. We feel that the type of new members we want, be they men or women, will be attracted to the facility as it is now.

Jacobson: You said in a newspaper interview that "We do not intend to compromise our heritage."



Ruvolo: It's exactly what I've been saying, that we will maintain our tradition as being a private, social club in San Francisco that offers membership to social, business and professional leaders, be they men or women. We will offer them a place where they can come socialize, have lunch, have dinner. We have great evening affairs, we have a fantastic kitchen, we have a great wine cellar, and I think the future is really bright for us.

Jacobson: I wish you luck.

Ruvolo: Thank you. I want to add one thing and that is a commendation to the board of directors. My board, and boards before it certainly, have had to be the arbiters of the membership issue. Some of them have publicly expressed their views on the issue. Despite their personal views on it, I think that they did as well as any group of nine human beings can do in looking at the concerns that were expressed by the membership as objectively and fairly as possible and in doing what was necessary for them to do with the best interest of the club in mind. And I thank them.

Jacobson: And I thank you.

Ruvolo: My pleasure.





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APPENDIX I

Statement Furnished to Club Members Concerning Real Estate Venture

With Fairmont Hotel Company

May 1, 1970



Statement Furnished to Club Members  
Concerning Real Estate Venture with Fairmont Hotel Company  
May 1, 1970

## MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSITY CLUB

### PLEASE READ THIS

### THE FUTURE OF THE CLUB MAY BE VITALLY AFFECTED BY YOUR ACTION OR INACTION

---

The undersigned are amongst the many members who were gravely concerned about the possible consequences of the arrangements announced at the last Annual Meeting for the purchase with Fairmont Hotel Co. of an interest in 830 Powell Street apartments.

We have followed this situation closely and believe that for the best interests of the Club, it should be fully discussed on the basis of the facts at the forthcoming Annual Meeting, if this becomes necessary. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the facts so that your considerations may be thoughtful and intelligent.

We submit the following review of the past year as a background for your considerations:

1. Shortly prior to the last meeting the Membership received a communication from the Board of Directors giving a vague description of a contract the Board had entered into with Fairmont Hotel Co. (Mr. Swig), providing for the purchase of the 830 Powell Street apartment building. This communication requested that members refrain from discussing the matter at the meeting as it was already a "fait accompli" and further discussion would only generate confusion and antagonism within the Membership.

2. The completed and signed contract presented at the Annual Meeting, involving over an estimated quarter of a million dollars, was so obviously disadvantageous to the Club that notwithstanding the unusual prior request of the Board to abstain from discussion, a prolonged discussion did in fact take place.

3. It was obvious that the Board of Directors had not informed the Membership concerning the underlying facts, and when questioned about them, it became painfully apparent that many of the Directors did not know or



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understand them themselves. The opposition to the contract was based mainly upon the following premises:

(a) That the contract committed the Club for an outlay of approximately \$284,000.00 over the next 25 years, without adequate showing as to where this money was to come from;

(b) That commitment for such an amount required approval of the Membership, which had not been obtained and this raised questions that the Directors had exceeded their authority and might be personally liable for any loss or cost to the Club;

(c) That the contract in its terms did not represent the best interests of the Club and in the end did not accomplish the main objective of the Club, which was to acquire complete title to "Miles Court", the alley behind the Club;

(d) That the contract, in itself, was illegal, being substantially without consideration running to the University Club;

(e) That the Directors had already caused the Club to borrow approximately \$25,000.00 to make an initial downpayment, incurring interest costs, legal fees and real estate commissions to Fairmont Hotel Co.'s attorneys and brokers.

4. Confronted with this opposition and prolonged discussion, the then President of the Club requested more time to further study the situation and ascertain the facts. He promised the Membership a full meeting on this contract within thirty days. On the basis of this promise, it was voted to adjourn. The promised meeting has never been held. In fact, no constructive communication concerning the facts has ever been sent to the Membership.

5. In anticipation of the promised meeting within thirty days, the opposition set about to learn more about the facts. This group of concerned members patiently began a study of the background information and went directly to the prime sources, which, among others, are the records of the real estate transactions and the decisions of the Supreme Court of the State of California.

6. Before the opposition had completed its investigation, but at a time when the facts seemed certain of substantiation, the Officers and Directors

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were personally so advised by the opposition. As soon as the basic factual information had been collected with the supporting documents, such as deeds, opinions, letters, etc., all of this material was turned over to the Officers of the Club with the suggestion that an independent firm of attorneys be hired to examine the findings and then advise the Board.

7. As a result, the Board authorized the employment of Philip Diamond, Esq., and the firm of Landels, Ripley, Gregory and Diamond, as Club attorneys. This entailed considerable legal costs in addition to interest cost on the money borrowed to pay on the contract and other costs. Then began a series of meetings, several with the opposition, first to investigate what had been uncovered and delivered to the Directors by the opposition and, second, to determine just what should be done.

8. This firm of attorneys did indeed determine and advise the Board that the agreement signed by the Officers was in fact illegal and without consideration, and was further illegal having been entered into and acted upon by the Directors without authority of the Membership (see Article IX, Secs. 8 and 9). The Board took no action on this advice.

9. On the contrary, the Directors decided that the contract should be renegotiated with Mr. Swig and to this end a number of long and extensive meetings were held, some of them with members of the opposition group. Mr. Swig indicated a desire to meet with some of the opposition group. Church Peters and Henry Hardy with Herb Ray representing the Directors met with Mr. Swig pursuant to this request on August 19, 1969. The results of this meeting were reported to the Board, particularly the fact that Mr. Swig would not confirm his representations as reported by the Board to the Membership by letter dated May 29, 1969, in which it was stated that the Board had:

"received assurance from the Fairmont that it would release the Club from its agreement should the Club members vote in the negative" [against the approval of the signed contract].

10. The opposition continued to press the Directors for prompt action, not only to save the Club from exorbitant payments (interest, legal fees, etc.) under the illegal agreement, but to keep the Club from becoming more deeply

involved. In all of this, the opposition took the position that the present contract was not satisfactory but if a satisfactory one, advantageous to the Club, could be worked out, it should be submitted to the Membership.

11. On September 5, 1969, members of the opposition met with members of the Board at the office of Landels, Ripley, Gregory and Diamond concerning a proposed agreement for renegotiation. Various objections were made by the opposition to the legal form of the proposed agreement and the accomplishment of the intended purposes, all of which objections were accepted and incorporated in a redraft.

12. After the September, 1969, meeting, the Board embarked upon a period of silence, refusing to give any information to the opposition. Mr. Diamond found himself in the position of being instructed not to release information and, being so confronted, wrote the following to Henry Hardy:

"I am personally most appreciative of all of your good help and I feel notwithstanding that the differences of opinion that apparently do exist within the membership, your efforts and devotion to the Club should be and are recognized with appreciation."

13. In a letter to the Membership dated September 30, 1969, it was stated:

"The Board of Directors *has decided to withdraw* from its agreement of April, 1969, with the Fairmont Hotel Company to purchase a one-half investment in 830 Powell Street." (Emphasis supplied.)

The Directors had reversed themselves and come around to the position recommended by the opposition nearly six months earlier and later confirmed by the Club's attorneys.

14. The letter to the Membership dated September 30, 1969, further stated that negotiations were then taking place to determine the terms of the withdrawal, and that when the negotiations were completed, information would be sent out. No such information has been sent to the Membership. During this period, the opposition learned that Mr. Swig was now asking for air rights over the Club property for an undisclosed period of time, rumored at 25 years minimum.

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15. On October 2, 1969, a further and wholly different draft agreement with Mr. Swig was submitted, which had been prepared by Mr. Diamond's firm. This apparently was a settlement agreement based upon a decision by the Board of Directors at the end of September.

16. However, at the suggestion of the opposition, the proposed agreement of October 2, 1969, with the Fairmont Hotel, was revised and rewritten to place the Club in what was believed to be a better position for negotiation. The terms suggested were these:

(a) A legal rescission [not merely a withdrawal] of the original agreement of April, 1969, and an immediate repayment to the Club of the full amount which it had paid under the illegal contract of April, 1969;

(b) A conveyance to the Fairmont of a defined easement with respect to Miles Court;

(c) Air rights above the Club property for a period of fifteen years upon the condition that the Fairmont Hotel and Mr. Swig would actively participate and help the University Club in settling its title to Miles Court in a McEnerney suit and agree to the closing of Miles Court, subject to the easement to the Fairmont Hotel referred to above.

This was obviously not a particularly happy solution, but rather represented a compromise which could possibly be approved both by Mr. Swig and the Membership.

17. In order that the opposition's point of view might not be misinterpreted because of its aid given in drafting the compromise negotiation agreement, the Board of Directors was advised on October 8, 1969, that settlement terms are important to the Club as a whole and, therefore, should be submitted to the Club as a whole under the By-laws.

18. The compromise negotiation agreement was submitted to the attorneys for Mr. Swig in the early part of October, 1969, and then to Mr. Swig, with the report being leaked out that the agreement was satisfactory in every respect except to the number of years for the air rights. The rumor was that Mr. Swig now wanted anywhere from 25 to 99 years of air rights. No information on the status of Mr. Swig's position was ever reported, in spite of numerous requests by the opposition.



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19. Since air rights became the real issue, the opposition submitted to the President, on November 28, 1969, the names of two highly qualified MAI appraisers on air rights and suggested that these men be consulted because in order to bargain with Mr. Swig, we should be informed as to the value of what we were bargaining with and would be required to give up in order to recoup payments made under the original contract.

20. It is understood that since November, negotiations with Mr. Swig have continued spasmodically, but to no purpose.

21. On January 28, 1970, it was suggested to the Board by the opposition that a special committee be appointed to negotiate with Mr. Swig. This would produce obvious benefits, i.e., Mr. Swig would be negotiating with persons who were not under any disability of having to withdraw from the earlier position. There was no response.

22. There has been substantially no communication from the Board between November of 1969 and February 27, 1970.

23. On February 27, 1970, a notice was sent by the Board of Directors to the Membership that the McEnerney suit was being filed and stated:

"this action will clearly establish ownership of the present Club property and resolve questions of ownership in the use of Miles Court".

24. The McEnerney suit was not filed until the last week in March and is entitled *Title Insurance Co. v. All Persons*, including the City of San Francisco, the Fairmont Hotel, and 830 Powell Street. It is Superior Court No. 44,065. The suit was filed by Philip Diamond's firm and is in good, understanding hands. It is now in the publication period which takes some eight weeks to fulfill. No estimate of the position of the parties defendant to this action is yet possible.

25. Upon respected authority, at the present time Philip Diamond's firm is on record with the Board of Directors as follows:

(a) If a new agreement is to be entered into between the Fairmont Hotel Corporation and the University Club regarding 830 Powell Street, it must contain in it a memorialization of an option in favor of the University Club to purchase the Fairmont Hotel's one-half interest in 830 Powell Street upon the basis of a formula set forth in the agreement;



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(b) That such an agreement, if prepared, must first be approved by the Membership in accordance with the Club By-laws, particularly Sections 8 and 9 of Article IX;

(c) Failure to arrive at a satisfactory new agreement and failing its approval by the Membership, then the original agreement of April, 1969, should be rescinded and all moneys paid under it returned to the Club. Diamond's firm recommends that if the voluntary return of the money is not made promptly, then a suit should be filed for its return *in toto*.

We are reliably informed that the negotiations did not follow the instructions or the purposes of the Board in the first instance, and instead of negotiating a settlement with Mr. Swig, they made the suggestion that if the Club could obtain a present interest in 830 Powell Street by the payments, without accelerating the note and if the Club was provided with an option to purchase the hotel's one-half interest in 830 Powell Street when the note was paid, the Club would then go along with a new agreement for the purchase of 830 Powell Street. Even here, the Board gave no indication that the deal was dependent upon approval by the Membership. Thus, the Club has gone full circle, and is back to the original position of one year ago, with the exception that it would be a different agreement. This position re-establishes the controversy as to whether or not the Club should enter into such an agreement, whether it can afford such agreement and whether or not the Club wishes to be involved in any kind of present dealing with the Fairmont Hotel Corporation.

At the time this letter is being prepared the terms of this proposed new agreement are not known. However, it is believed that it is most important that the Membership be supplied with the facts so that any action may be intelligent and for the best interests of the University Club.

#### SUMMARY

A year has gone by. An enormous amount of time and money have been spent with still no result. It is just as clear now as it was a year ago that the original agreement of April, 1969, is invalid and unworkable. The Club has

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spent over twenty-five thousand (\$25,000.00) dollars under this agreement. If a new agreement is presented the Club will be faced with an immediate payment ~~of~~ a minimum of twenty thousand (\$20,000.00) dollars more, plus substantial monthly payments for a prolonged number of years, which money the Club does not have. How this money is proposed to be raised and the necessity for it are of vital concern to every Member. The Directors should take some positive complete position with respect to 830 Powell Street, and submit the proposal for the approval or disapproval of the entire Membership by formal secret ballot *before* any commitments are made.

San Francisco, California

May 1, 1970

Respectfully submitted,

JOHN B. STUPPIN  
 GEORGE B. FRANKFORTH, JR.  
 TINDALL E. CASHION  
 S. VILAS BECKWITH  
 CHURCHILL C. PETERS  
 SIDNEY V. W. PETERS  
 FREDERIC H. JOHNSON  
 JOHN B. MACKINLAY  
 SHANE BUTLER  
 FRANK J. BAUMGARTEN  
 HENRY GIFFORD HARDY  
 GORDON SIMPSON  
 TIMOTHY COLVIN  
 CARL F. MEHLHOP

WALTER W. NILES  
 ROBERT D. BUTLER  
 LEON F. DEFREMERY  
 MERRILL C. MORSHEAD, JR.  
 TIMOTHY B. LAYDEN  
 DR. FRANK H. PIERCE  
 JOHN B. BOOTH  
 RICHARD E. H. JULIEN, JR.  
 JOHN D. BODEN  
 JAMES L. WALKER  
 H. H. BISHOPRIC  
 JOHN C. WILSON JR.  
 LLOYD ALLEN  
 B. B. JOSI

## APPENDIX II

"Our Club Heritage," Talks by F. Barreda Sherman and  
Leon de Fremery, May 8, 1981



## OUR CLUB HERITAGE

Talks By

F. Barreda Sherman, Historian and Author

Leon de Fremery, Past President, 1944-45, 1945-46, 1946-47  
University Club

May 8, 1981

Moderator:

The ones I came up with I thought I'd better not mention today because we have ladies present. I heard some very good ones, but you didn't come to hear me speak so instead I'm going to rely on something that Henry Hardy gave me that was in Herb Caen's column awhile back and I think it's very appropriate for the type of meeting we're having. It says, "We have already lost so much that meant so little to so many. We nostalgics are a dying lot; it's built in at the factory. Memories are not for the young except in very special cases." And with that I would like to open our program by introducing Mr. Barreda Sherman. Mr. Sherman . . .

Mr. Sherman:

Thank you. I appreciate your welcome, but I am afraid I am destined to disappoint you in one important point. The letter that Warren Snodgrass wrote me said that the committee was expecting this talk to supply information regarding historical events and vignettes involving our club and its members. Well, I didn't exactly know what a vignette was, so I looked it up in the dictionary and it said: "Vignette: a depiction in words especially one of a dainty kind." Now, I ask you, Mr. Snodgrass, what is there that is dainty in the club life of these lusty, red-blooded members that we have before us? I could find none. I worked all the way through the history of the club since 1890 as written by Nathaniel Blaisdell and Lewis Mansfield up to 1954, but I could find nothing. Perhaps something dainty has happened since then.

But, at any rate, I can take you back personally to how the club was in the last century. Athena leapt full armed from the head of Zeus. In the same way, the University Club sprang full-fledged from the brain of one man. His name was William Thomas subsequently affectionately known as Uncle Billy, a prominent attorney in San Francisco, graduated Harvard, Class



of 1873, and for a number of years, president of the Harvard Club which for quite a long time he had been active in. He had seen over the years how much Harvard men had enjoyed one another's company and friendship, and he thought we should have a University Club in San Francisco where men who graduated from all colleges could join together in a congenial atmosphere and have a happy time together. So, at the next meeting of the Harvard Club, the midsummer meeting in July 17, 1890, the Harvard men invited to the dinner at the Maison d'Or, one of the great restaurants of San Francisco, all the other college men in town that they happened to know about. They all had dinner and after the wine and food had mellowed them, why Mr. Thomas got up and made his suggestion that a University Club be founded. Everybody was enthusiastic immediately for such a thing and two days later an organization meeting was held in the offices of Chickering & Gregory, and the club was set up with Mr. Thomas as president and his fellow Harvard man, Mr. Harold Wheeler of the Class of '77, as secretary.

There were at that meeting twenty-four men whose names we have, and they represented Harvard, Yale, University of California, Amherst, Columbia, Brown, Hamilton, University of Virginia, Williams and the naval and military academies. There were some more colleges mentioned, but we have no record of them. You may be surprised that Stanford is not here because Stanford men have played such an important part in the club over the years. But there weren't any then. Stanford was not founded until one year after the University Club and its first class, graduated in 1895, included Herbert Hoover, one of our fellow members.

Thereupon, the club was incorporated on August 8, 1890. That was quick work for the association of gentlemen to provide social and recreational facilities at that time, so temporarily quarters were taken in the California Market, which was down between California, Montgomery, Pine, and Kearny streets -- at that time a very important facility in the city, and we occupied for a year the quarters of the second floor. During that time, they hunted hard to find a place that would be more permanent and they leased a building, a two-story Victorian residence at 722 Sutter Street, just above Taylor Street on the cable car line. The building had to be made over by Clinton Day, the architect who undertook the exterior, and Page Brown, who undertook the interior. Page Brown later on became prominent as the builder of the Ferry Building.

There was a rapid increase in members. They all flocked to the club. A second building had to be obtained that was attached to the first. The front of the building which had had the garden in front of it was extended to the street line. I know that the architects in all did a very good job and made a very comfortable place of it all because I went there for lunch

with my father in 1899 and I saw that they were very comfortable. There was a lounge, a dining room, a domino room that looked down on the street where you could watch the girls go by, and many bedrooms because many of the club members then lived at the club, which was a wise thing to do because it was a very good place to eat.

Now perhaps you would be interested to know what the menus provided back in 1894. These foods were served in a certain amount of style. There was a trolley, as it was called then, a cart we would call it now, with a baron of beef on it; a servitor in chef's cap and with a steel sharpener hanging by a chain on a leather belt and of course a sharp knife, who would go around and cut a piece for you to your satisfaction; and there was a sommelier with a golden chain around his neck with the wine cellar keys hanging from it and wearing a leather apron. Very classy. The menu listed soups, hors d'oeuvres, fish, poultry, roast, salad, desert. And just in case you may be interested -- you might feel a little hungry after this -- I'll tell you that you could get: turtle soup for 20 cents, pompano maitre d'hotel for 40 cents, brochette of sweet breads for 35 cents, royal doves and bacon, 25 cents, fillet of beef, 24 cents and figs and cream at 20 cents. If any of you here are without your pocket calculators, I'll tell you that the total was \$1.40 if you thought you could eat that much.

The man who took care of all this for us was a fellow named Wilkenson, who served us for many years then and after the fire and who invented Wilkie sauce. You know about Wilkie sauce; it's a very delicious sauce. It was a secret sauce, the recipe for which he would never reveal; it was never written down, but after he left, I believe somebody found out what was in it.

In 1902, the club, although designed primarily for recreational purposes, was called upon for public service. It was just before the California-Stanford football game. California's most valuable player was a man named Locomotive Smith. Those were the days of push and grunt on the football field. There was no forward pass, but by pushing and grunting if you could make five yards you got a first down. And he was pretty good at pushing and grunting, and he was also a pretty good runner when it came to running back a kick. Well, he was very important to the California team. But the Stanford team said he wasn't qualified to play, and that was a very serious matter that had to be decided. So they turned to the University Club, that organization of educated college men, to make the decision.

The president of the Club set up a committee, one man from every college represented in the club and they met for two nights till after midnight. They finally decided unanimously that Locomotive Smith was not qualified to play. It was a



terrible blow to California and it created great resentment against the University Club over there in Berkeley. Well, the game was played, two days later out on a field about where Lake Street runs across Park Presidio parkway now. Would you like to know how the game came out? All right, I'll tell you. I was there. I had no affiliation with any college at that time. My father was a Trinity graduate, but he was also a member of the medical faculty and so we agreed that we would cheer for California. At the beginning of the game, Stanford kicked off to California and a man named Bobby Sherman, a substitute for the famous Locomotive, got the ball on the five yard line. Bobby Sherman picked up the ball on the five yard line and with the protection of "Orvie" Overall he ran the length of the field for a touchdown. California won the game and the resentment against the University Club disappeared.

There's another thing that I found out about recently, an incident which is very important to the development of motor transportation in the United States of America, if not the world. On the night of May 23, 1903, a guest was dining at the club. His name was Dr. Nelson Jackson, and he was from near Burlington, Vermont. He was also a very enthusiastic motorist, although motoring was very early in its stage at this point. The members of the club at the next table were having a discussion as to the future of the automobile. They were talking rather loudly, and they came to the conclusion that the automobile had no future. This aroused Dr. Jackson who felt very strongly about it, and he joined them, and they engaged in a fiery argument which ended by his saying that he bet he could drive a car across the United States.

Well, everybody laughed, and he had to put up the money and bet \$50 that he could do it. So he went to work and he bought a Winton motor carriage, which to his mind was the best vehicle for the occasion. He bought it from a local citizen for \$1200, which is somewhat above the list price at the time, and he got himself a very important man named Sewell Crocker, who was an excellent machinist who came down from Oregon.

In five days they were off in the Winton motor carriage with a tremendous amount of equipment, which I will not attempt to describe to you. It was a two-chair car (yes, chair; they didn't have seats in those days), twenty horsepower, two cylinder, two-cycle motor, water cooled, and they traveled across the country with the most tremendous difficulty since there was no transcontinental highway then and in many cases there wasn't any road at all. They were hindered by rocks, quicksand, mud, streams with no bridges, but they were joined by a dog in Idaho who had great trouble with dust in his eyes so they got him goggles which he wore all the way across the continent. Because they did finally get across the continent. In 245 hours, they traveled 230 miles down the Hudson River Valley and they arrived

in New York 63 days after leaving San Francisco. About a third of that time had been spent resting, repairing, and waiting for spare parts to replace those which had broken or had fallen off.

This aroused the most tremendous enthusiasm for automobiles and was an important factor in the development of the industry in the United States of America. So we can be very proud that the University Club had something to do with it and furthermore supplied \$50 for the cost. By the way, when the doctor got back home to Burlington, he was arrested for driving over six miles per hour on a public street.

The really important incident in the life of the club came, of course, on April 18, 1906. The building stood up all right, but the fire came and everything, everything was lost: all the records except for the accounts, all the furnishings except for the Keith landscape, which was given to us by the artist and hangs over the mantelpiece over the lounge. That was saved by our first secretary, Mr. Wheeler, who cut it out of its frame and brought it out with the account books. Well, then we had nothing, absolutely nothing. But still, immediately within twenty-five days, we had a new place for our club in the home of Dr. Kaspar Pischell who lived out on 1815 California Street on the other side of Franklin, where the fire stopped. We were able to keep open house, and the members of the Union Club and the Bohemian Club had the use of our facilities.

We were there about three years, but without any really permanent headquarters, memberships fell off and we really had to do something to keep going. So we looked around for a new site. A number were considered, but the offer was made to us by Stanford University Trustees of this property here and was so favorable that we couldn't turn it down. I don't know why any other site was considered as a matter of fact. You may not know, but this is the site of Governor Stanford's stables when he had his great house across the street where Stanford Court is now. He had his stables here for driving around the city. As you know, he was a great horse lover. I hope the horses got out in 1906.

So we came to an agreement with Stanford and bought the property from them, they providing all the money for the purchase of the property and all the money for the building as well, so far as I can find out. At any rate, the final deal was closed in June 1908, and the total figure was \$129,248. The building was quickly constructed and we moved in on October 1909. Very shortly thereafter they held a reception for the ladies. It was the last time as far as I know that a female defiled, I'll use a chauvinist work, defiled this club by her presence until 1942 when Mr. Peters over there opened the club up.



The following number of years were hard for the club: World War I, Prohibition, and the Depression. Fortunately, while we had sixty men in the service in World War I, we lost only one, Charles J. Freeborn, an appropriate name for an American who died in a war fought to save the world for democracy.

In 1920, I joined the club. My father brought me to lunch, right down there in that corner overlooking California Street, and he suggested it would be a good idea for me to join. As I could get in cheaper by joining promptly, I did so. Incidentally, in those days it was customary to make a young, new member secretary and treasurer. I had to keep the minutes of the directors meetings, of course (I was a director myself), but so far as my duties as treasurer were concerned, I signed the checks only after somebody who knew more about them had first signed them.

Perhaps you'd like to know something about what the club looked like then. Well, it looked basically very much the same. Downstairs there was no large cloak room as there is now. I didn't go into the bedrooms much, but I know they were infinitely better then. On the third floor here, there was no cocktail lounge. That area was occupied by two small dining rooms, one where the directors frequently met and then a long, narrow one facing Powell Street which was very unattractive -- its only important furniture other than the table and chairs being a golden oak piano which had a dangerous life. On one occasion the roistering members of the club were not satisfied dining there with the music produced and they pushed it halfway out the window to Powell Street before it was saved. Just think, it could have landed on somebody.

There was a fourth floor lounge, there was no fourth floor bar, and the bar was in the room where I believe the directors meet at the other end of the building. At the time I joined, it was Prohibition, and the walls of the bar were covered with private lockers for various members who had the keys to them. How they got the liquor to put into the lockers I don't know. There was one architectural feature that I never saw, but I was assured that it was there, and that was a private, secret passageway that led to the building next door, then occupied by some ladies who my grandfather would have called "fascinating ladies of flexible virtue." Of course, I couldn't imagine what such a door would be for. Could it be for people to escape in case of fire or raids by police? What was it for? I never found out. In all the research that I have done I was unable to find anything in writing about the use of that door by any member or by any fascinating lady of flexible virtue. Now I believe it no longer exists, but I'm not sure.

During those hard days of the War, Prohibition, and the Depression, attendance at the club fell off, particularly in the



evening. But there was some joy here, too. There was quite a lot of singing in the club and for some years we had minstrel shows, a Christmas dinner, and later on there was a Spring Shambles. There were a lot of songs and some very, very clever lyrics written by William Hutchinson and Jim Paramore and put to the music of popular songs. These have all been published in a very attractive book by Frank Adams called, "Songs of the University Club," put out in 1947.

I should mention that in 1920 when I joined the club, the statue of Hermes was on the fourth floor rotunda on the same great heavy travertine base that it has now. It sat there for ten years until the Fire Department said that if we had a fire here and if anything was weakened in the supports it would go right through the basement, so we'd better take it away. So it was taken away and stayed in the cellar until 1964, when it came out and was put where it is now in the park. As you know, in 1974, it was stolen. Henry Hardy immediately appealed to the police for help. They were absolutely helpless, so he publicized the loss to the newspapers and TV stations of San Francisco and said that he wanted it back, no questions asked. And due to that, somebody said, I know where it is, and Henry got it back. He's published a story of the whole thing which I wish I had time to tell you. It's a fascinating story and one of the things that shows us how important Mr. Hardy is to us.

He's important in another way, too. In 1947, as Chairman of the House Committee, he was trying to clean things, and he was in the library looking for a broom so he could sweep it out a little. He was looking here and there -- he thought there might be a broom closet -- and he found a secret door in the wall. In that there was no broom, but there were two volumes of the original Audobon prints which were very helpful to have at the time from a financial standpoint. We kept one of them which I think is now in the cocktail lounge on the third floor, although I have not looked.

I should tell you about Mr. Huidobro. He was the Chilean consul and was a member of the club. He was very fond of the club and he noticed that these transoms here had no stained glass in them, nor did the two at the other end. The central ones were as they are now when the club was built: Stanford, California, Harvard, Yale, with the club seal in the center. So Mr. Huidobro gave us that central panel there which memorializes the University of San Felipe in Santiago, of which he was a graduate. He was a very fine looking man, very tall with black hair and very dark eyes, always wore a black suit, black hat, and always carried a cane and had white pipings around the edge of his vest. He was austere, courteous always and had bushy sideburns. One day a young fellow, not a member of the club, somehow met him and accosted him saying, "Hey, mister, what do you call those things on the side of your face?" Mr. Huidobro

drew himself up and he looked at him and said, "On me they are called mutton chops. On you they would be called pork chops."

In 1952, thirty years after Mr. Huidobro's generosity, we succeeded in raising by private subscription enough money to put windows in here for Columbia and the University of Virginia for two of the original members so to speak: Princeton, Cornell, Michigan, and the Universities of Oregon and Washington. So now all those transoms are filled.

In 1929, the first squash court was put down here, and followed in 1930 by a second one. And thus started a tradition of sport in the club which you all know is extremely important. In 1935, at the end of Prohibition, the fourth floor bar was installed, which is also very important.

In 1942, as Churchill Peters seems to get the blame for this, they let the women in and I certainly welcomed that as I loved to come here for dinner with my wife and also with my female children. My male child didn't have any special privilege because he could get in anyway. And that meant a lot to me over the years. We always had a delightful dinner, drinks beforehand.

Of course, World War II was a heavy blow as a great many members had to leave the club then, but a great many also returned. At that time, through the war and the inability to get money to make improvements, the club was really in delapidated condition. The fourth floor lounge was ratty, the stuffing was coming out of the furniture and everything looked terrible. Lord Halifax, the British ambassador to the United States, came here and was invited to lunch, and we apologized for the appearance of the room. He said, "I like the frowst; it reminds me of the clubs in London."

Down in the dining room, the walls were tan, the original of this gunnisack-like material on the walls. They were stained from leaks upstairs, and on the wall hung some old moth-eaten and moldy heads of animals which had been killed by members and given to us. There were some elkhorns here, a buffalo head and a Rocky Mountain sheep and a Rocky Mountain goat, and down there in the corner there was a very handsome horned animal shot by Mr. Norm Livermore in Africa. But as the situation got bad, the condition of that animal got bad, and an eye fell out, so I was told, and landed in Mr. John Renshaw's soup. That sort of emphasized that something should be done to improve the situation.

Leon de Fremery, who was then about to become our president, found on taking office that he was confronted by very serious and totally unexpected financial problems. He will tell us shortly how he overcame these difficulties, putting the club



on a sound financial footing and incidentally providing funds for the sorely needed renovations. This was an important event in our club history and an accomplishment for which Leon should always be remembered with gratitude.

Mr. de Fremery:

When I became president, I thought the club was in fairly satisfactory financial shape, and I wasn't particularly concerned about that, but I was concerned about something else. I was concerned about the situation that existed in our front office. At that time we had a manager who was an ex-army officer and he knew absolutely nothing about club management. And when I say nothing, I mean absolutely nothing. He didn't even know how to employ the proper help to represent the club at the front office. For example, I phoned down on one occasion and asked for some information that I needed, and I was met with this answer: "That's going to cause a little work. I'm not going to do that for a stop-gap president." That was quite a shock. So I said to him, "You're backing the wrong horse, and you'll shortly find out about that," which I certainly hoped would be true. I saw, of course, that I needed a new manager and I needed him in a hurry. So I interviewed quite a few prospects, applicants, and I selected one whose name was Edward Walsh. And that was the start of a very long relationship that existed between Walsh and myself during my term of office. I remember that I began having the impression that the club would have a hard time existing without Walsh's efforts, and it therefore came as a very severe shock to me when I discovered that Walsh had done something for which he ought to have been fired.

Now, I found that out in this way: I naturally examined all the financial statements that came down, because I was trying to keep an eye on the club's financial position. I also examined the bank statements, and when I was looking at the bank statements, I discovered that a club check in the amount of some three thousand dollars to our principal supplier was outstanding. Had been outstanding for a couple of months.

That seemed a little strange to me, so I decided to look into this. Now I employed then the same principle that I adopted throughout: I never asked anybody else to furnish the information I wanted when I could get it myself. So what did I do then? I went out to the supplier's office, introduced myself as the President of the University Club (to the manager, that is). I tried to cover my puzzlement by saying that we had recently fired which was true, our entire front office staff, that no one there knew anything about the club's activities, and our bookkeeper wanted to know something about our account with him because that was the largest account; she wanted to know something about them that nobody could answer, and neither could

I. So I said I came out there to find out. I said I would like to see our folder. So he produced our folder and there, right there on the very top was a check; that \$3,000 check was there right on the top. It obviously wasn't mislaid.

So I thought about that and I decided there was only one possible answer as to why it was there, and that was because Walsh had requested the supplier not to deposit that check, not to put it through. Well, the next question was: What was that for? What was he going to do with it? Well, I thought about that considerably and I returned to my office and I followed my usual procedure by not saying anything to anybody. And very, very early the next morning -- that's the first time Walsh appears -- he started talking about problems he'd had with the kitchen help, told me what he was doing about it. I can't say that he was agitated; but his voice wasn't quite exactly natural, and furthermore, he kept looking at me all the time. I did nothing. Finally he said, "Mr. D. -- that's what he called me -- I'd hate to play poker with you." And I said, "Well, that might not be a bad judgment. I had the reputation of being a pretty good poker player when I was in law school." And I still say nothing.

Well, Walsh couldn't continue and Walsh said, "What are you going to do about that check?" And I said, "Walsh, I ought to fire you for that. I very definitely ought to fire you for that, and if I did fire you for that you'd never get another job as a club manager. In fact, I think you'd never get any kind of a decent job at all. When I think about it, I think you would be absolutely, completely ruined. And I don't want to do that. I'm willing to carry you on only for one reason. I think if you made a personal promise to me, just between the two of us, if you promise that you would or you would not do something, if you sincerely promise me, I think you'd keep your promise. So I'll keep you on if you'll promise me that as long as you're manager of this club, you will never again play the races." And Holy Moses you ought to have seen what happened! I hit the jackpot, I hit the nail on the head, and it was obvious that I was right.

Well, I'll cut all that short, He promised, of course. He kept his promise. But the net result of that was that he knew I'd saved his life and his skin, and he became absolutely and completely devoted to me. And the result of that devotion, plus his undoubted ability, led me to make the promise to the Stanford Trustees who were directed to me for the elimination of debts, and that's why I'm fairly well known: I was largely responsible for the elimination of the debts to Stanford. It was because of his devotion to me and his undoubted ability that I made a proposal to the Stanford Trustees that otherwise I would have never dared.

It couldn't be executed, but I said to the Trustees,



"I'd like to get rid of that debt. And I think you would, too. You don't want that debt hanging over you forever. Something should be done about it. Now, I believe that can be eliminated with your help if we first prove our sincerity of effort, and our authority to accomplish that, by paying to the Stanford Trustees \$1,000 a month for three years. And you say offhand, 'How the hell can you do that? That would seem to be impossible. How could a club that is not in the best of financial circumstances, how can they possibly pay \$1,000 a month, not just for three years, but for any period of time?' Well, the answer is, they can, and this is how it is done."

Fortunately, I knew enough about club management and accounting to realize how you can do a thing like that. What you do is you don't pay out money for any purpose whatsoever. A repair comes along -- that's an example I can think of right off -- you don't make that repair. Suppose there's a tear in the leather covering of a chair. Well, to repair that you'd have to recover the chair. What do you do? Fix it up with a little scotch tape, that's what you do. And of course, it looked like hell, but you are accomplishing your purpose, you're paying \$1000 a month to the Stanford Trustees, and you're accumulating the cash to do it.

So I talked to Walsh about this. I told him I intended to say to the Trustees this: I told him I was going to get rid of that damned debt, and I was going to have the nerve to go up to them to ask them to help us get rid of that debt. "I can't possibly do that by just saying, 'I don't like the debt, please cut it out.' I have to prove that we are sincere, and in order to do that, I have to say that we're going to pay \$1,000 a month for three years. Can you do that?" Walsh thought about it for a while and said, "Well, to you I trust, but it's going to be terribly difficult to do. But," he said, "yes, I think I can do it."

So I went before the Trustees and told them I'd come to talk to them about the debt, and that debt would never be paid, it would last forever. You can't expect the club with even supreme effort to accumulate \$4-5,000 and pay it on the debt when the result of it is that nothing is accomplished, because anybody can see that the debt is never going to be paid in that fashion. So I said that I had a proposition to make: "I'm going to prove to you the sincerity of my proposal by saying that we will pay you \$1,000 a month for three years if we can see daylight. And you have to provide the daylight. And the daylight has to be that if we succeed in doing that for three years, you will cut the debt down to a figure we agree on." They cut the debt down to \$100,000, because that was the figure that both sides agreed the club could handle.

Well, they said they would ask their manager, Mr.



Walker, to look into that and that he would advise me, which he did very shortly. He called me in and said, "The Stanford Trustees are willing to go along, but only on the condition that you establish a fund in Wells Fargo Bank of \$12,000 and an agreement with guarantors to make up the difference."

So I raised \$12,000. Under normal circumstances that wouldn't be too difficult, but these circumstances weren't normal. Anybody that could be expected to put up \$1,000 would know that the chances of getting back his \$1,000 were practically nil. And nobody wants to put up \$1,000 when he's never going to see it again. So I thought that over, and I said that figure was deliberately fixed. I had eleven members that I thought might put up \$1,000 attend a meeting or luncheon, I suppose, and got the dining room here at the club. They came, and I told them about my plan, about what I proposed to do and how I planned to get rid of the debt and how the Stanford Trustees wanted the fund. I said, "I will contribute the first \$1,000 to that fund." Well, of course they could see that that left \$11,000, and they could also see that there were eleven of them there, and that left no room at all for weaseling. They knew they were stuck and they put up the \$1,000 each and the fund was created and the plan went into effect.

So then followed the worst period that this club has ever been through. I don't believe any club could go through such a period and survive. This club did it because of number one, Walsh's devotion to me and his willingness to do anything on heaven and earth to help me, and of course I told him what this was all about, and number two was his ability.

Well, I happen to think I'm rambiling a little bit, but finally through the three years, the annual meeting came up. And I said to Walsh, "At the last annual meeting there were only three people present." That didn't constitute a quorum, but we had passed a flock of resolutions to keep the club in existence for the following year. The whole damn thing was a fake. And I said, "I'm not going to have such a thing in my administration, so what I'm going to do is when I send out notices of the annual meeting, I'm going to say that at the conclusion of the meeting dinner will be served to all the members present for which there will be no charge. "Well," Walsh said, "these days we can't possibly do that. If you send out a notice that there's going to be a free dinner, the member will flock in. I can't possibly serve a free dinner." I said, "I hope they do flock in. When they flock in they're going to flock into the bar and some of them won't even make the meeting." I said, "The profits from the operation of the bar will easily pay for the dinner, because when you're talking about the cost of the dinner you're going to serve, you have to remember you're not talking about overhead or other charges, you're just talking about out-of-pocket costs for the food, and that's damn low. So it could easily be done." And

that's what happened. We held the annual meeting, members showed up.

I'll finish this all off by saying that eventually the three years were completed. The Stanford Trustees returned the \$12,000 fund. I was able to write a letter to each of the depositors returning the deposit plus interest at 12 percent, which was the rate then. Conditions looked so favorable that I was able to suggest an increase in the dues. I said that sometime in the future the initiation fee would be doubled. You could double it because it was terribly low at that time.

The changed financial condition of the club made it very attractive again. That worked very satisfactorily; members that had resigned bought back in. And so the day soon arrived where we couldn't double the initiation fee again, but we did raise it considerably, and still more members bought back. As the result of all the initiation fees coming in, the long-suffering Walsh was able to make some of the repairs that had been delayed and was able to put the club back into a decent form. And so when the end of my term came, I was able to have a feeling of satisfaction. I thought, "Well, conditions were not really so bad, they were coming along the way I had hoped they would."

I was succeeded in my office as president by Mr. Beckwith. Now I want you to remember this: I did not, in my administration, pay off the Stanford Loan. All I did was reduce it to \$100,000, and \$100,000 is still a hell of a large figure. And when it was turned over to Beckwith, he said, "Well, okay," and paid it off. So the upshot of all of this was the club actually for the first time in its existence came out of debt.

I want to conclude only with this one statement. I know, I hear rumors here and there, I'm surprised I was not introduced that way today, that I was the man who saved the club and all that sort of stuff, that I paid off the Stanford debt. I didn't. I reduced it to \$100,000. There were three people involved in the quest for eliminating the Stanford debt. I thought up the plan behind my desk doing nothing but thinking about it. I thought up the plan. Walsh came along and executed a plan that was utterly impossible. He did that. And we were both followed by Beckwith who paid off the \$100,000. So in passing off credit, there were three people involved. I thank you.

Moderator:

Thank you, Leon, thank you, Mr. Sherman. In the dining room today are some photographs. Awhile back Mr. Sherman gave the Arts and Literature Committee some slides that he had taken



over a period of years at the club, views from the club window. And we thought it was appropriate to hang these pictures in the club today when Mr. Sherman spoke. But Ted Burgess also had one of the slides blown up and there's a photograph here, Mr. Sherman, from one of your slides that the Arts and Literature Committee and Mr. Burgess would like you to take home with you today. [Applause] And I would like to thank both Leon and Mr. Sherman again. You did a marvelous job and we all appreciate it. Thank you. [More Applause] If anybody would like to ask any questions, we'll be happy to entertain some. Just a minute -- Mr. Sherman would like to say some remarks in closing.

Mr. Sherman:

So now the lounge was fixed up with new covers for the furniture, new lamps, and new coverings for the walls. And the dining room was fixed. The wall covering was painted green, the moth-eaten heads were taken away. I thought that perhaps we could raise a little money by selling the elk's head to the -- what is it? the Endangered and Protected Species organization? But anyway, whatever the name is, I called up the secretary of the Elks Club and I said, "We have a very nice set of elks' heads here. Would you like them?" "Well," he said, "Mr. Sherman, I'm very grateful to you for suggesting it, but the trouble is that our cellar is full of elks' horns."

So in 1950, as part of the renovation, Chauncey McKeevery very generously gave to the club the portrait of Hong, our long-time head barman, that hangs in the bar upstairs. It was painted by Moya del Pino, a very charming gentleman and an excellent painter, as you can see. Now Moya told me that evening that just as he'd finished, he thought that he ought to show it to Hong's family. Family feeling is very strong among the Chinese, and he thought that they should see it and have an opportunity to express their opinion on it. So he had it on an easel in the bar. And they came up one morning and he stood back and they all looked at it, and they talked to one another and gesticulated, and he began to get worried. What was wrong? He had spent so much time on it; he thought he had the expression just right, as he had. But they went on talking. And he became more and more worried. Finally, they stopped talking, and one came towards him and he said, "Mister, there is one thing wrong about it." Moya's heart fell into his boots. What could be wrong? Did he have to do the whole thing over again? And they said, "His tie is twisted. We would like the tie put on straight." And that settled it.

In considering the events of the past, there are some points which are very important. And that is that we've had a loyal membership; we've had a series of dedicated officers and committee members, too many to be named; and we have maintained

the spirit of companionship and fellowship that over the past three generations has persisted and gives us promise that his club will continue to supply that intangible but invaluable contribution to the life of the members in the future.

One final incident: In 1961, a fellow member, Clay Miller, was ninety years old. And twenty of us decided to give him a luncheon because of our affection for him, our admiration for him. So we had a very pleasant lunch and afterwards he gave a delightful little talk, which he ended by reading a poem which made quite an impression on me. I asked him who had written it, and he said, "I wrote it." And I said, "Could I have a copy?" Well, he seemed a little hesitant about that, but he finally did send me a copy, saying, "You asked for this by me. It's not very good poetry, but a good idea. Best wishes, Clay Miller." He called the poem "Counting."

Count your garden by the flowers  
Never by the leaves that fall.  
Count your days by golden hours  
Never mind the clouds at all.  
Count your nights by stars, not shadows.  
Count your life by faith, not fears.  
And then with joy on every birthday,  
Count your age by friends, not years.





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